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TALES OF THE VILLAGE.

BY

FRANCIS E. PAGET, M. A.

RECTOR OF ELFORD,
AND CHAPLAIN TO THE LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD.

Serves the Third and Last.

"Now if a shepherd know not which grass will bane, and which not, how is he fit to be a shepherd? Wherefore the Parson hath thoroughly canvassed all the particulars of human actions, at least all those which he observeth are most incident to his parish."

HERBERT'S Country Parson.



FIRST AMERICAN EDITION.

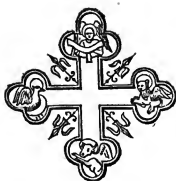
NEW-YORK:

D. APPLETON & CO. 200 BROADWAY.

PHILADELPHIA:

GEO. S. APPLETON, 148 CHESNUT-STREET.

MDCCCXLIV.





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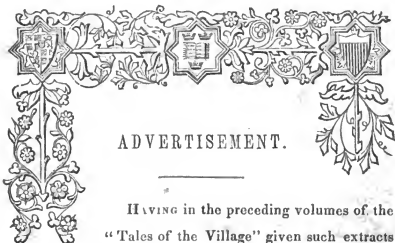
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ADVERTISEMENT.

HAVING in the preceding volumes of the "Tales of the Village" given such extracts from my parochial journals as seemed best to illustrate the working of Church-principles as opposed to those of Romanism and Dissent, I have now, in conclusion, added one tale more, in which the characters of the Churchman and the Infidel appear in contrast.

And having thus discharged the task which I proposed to myself at the outset of my undertaking, it only remains for me to express my satisfaction at the favour with which the work has hitherto been received, and my sincere hope that my readers may be led to exercise a right judgment on the various points which I have brought under their notice, and discussed as fairly and honestly as I could.

REGINALD WARLINGHAM.

YATESHULL VICARAGE,
Michaelmas, 1841.



TALES OF THE VILLAGE.



The Miser's Refr.

Like some lone Chartreux stands the good old hall,
Silence without, and fasts within the wall ;
No rafter'd roofs with dance and tabor sound,
No noontide bell invites the country round ;
Tenants with sighs the smokeless tow'rs survey,
And turn th' unwilling steeds another way ;
Benighted wanderers, the forest o'er,
Curse the sav'd candle and unop'ning door ;
While the gaunt mastiff, growling at the gate,
Affrights the beggar whom he longs to eat.

POPE.





CHAPTER I.

SOME thirty or five and thirty years ago, there stood at one extremity of our straggling parish one of those black and white houses which in former times were so commonly to be seen in the midland counties of Chester and Stafford. The family to whom the mansion and surrounding estate belonged (and who had been in possession of it for many ages) seem never to have risen above the rank of petty squires, and to have been content to pass their unambitious days in peaceful obscurity, with no further care than to transmit to their successors the rich meadows and substantial edifice which their fathers had erected beside the still waters of the silver Trent.

I should suppose that early in the last century, and while still in good repair, Baggesden Hall must have been a very pleasant residence. The broken outline formed by its many projecting gables crowned with hip-knobs, and ornamented with barge-boards of various patterns,—the fantastic devices of circles, and crosses, and quatrefoils of black timber intersecting each other on the white surface of the plaster,—the heavy stacks of decorated chimneys,—and the long ranges of tall thickly-set

windows, occupying almost the whole frontage of the building, gave it an air of picturesque beauty without, as well as of comfort and cheerfulness within; while the clipped yew-trees, the formal terraces with steep banks of shelving turf,—the smooth bowling-green, and cumbersome stone vases set up at intervals among the parterres, showed that its possessors had not been wanting in their efforts to adorn and beautify (after the fashion of the day) the pleasure-ground which surrounded it.

But *I* never saw Baggesden Hall in any other state than that of dilapidation and decay. Its owner, when *I* first became vicar of Yateshull, was the last heir-male of his race;—an aged man, in whom the love of money had almost obliterated every sentiment which should have bound him to his fellow-men.

The father of Gideon Bagges (for that was his name) had been a compound between the spendthrift, the horse-jockey, and the fool; and, breaking his neck in a fox chase, left his paternal property, miserably encumbered, to an only son. Naturally selfish, the embarrassed circumstances in which the young heir found himself, and the daily experience of the evils which his father's extravagance had entailed upon him, tempted Gideon to run into the other extreme; and accordingly, at that period of life when men are supposed to be more free with their money than when they have acquired the dear-bought lessons of experience, he was noted and disliked throughout the neighbourhood for his meanness and parsimonious habits.

A few years brought his affairs round; and then his neighbours supposed that he “would marry, and live

like a gentleman;" but Gideon was in no hurry to enter into wedlock ; and the marvel is, that, when prudential considerations permitted him to do so, he found any person to marry him,—for, if report say true, there was nothing engaging in his appearance or manners even in his best days. However, by some unaccountable accident he contrived to win the affections of an amiable gentle-hearted woman, whose chief charm in his eyes was a fortune of £30,000. Her heart he broke, by his harshness and coarse fractious temper, within a few years after marriage.

Having no children, he was then free to do what he pleased ; and as he had all that he wanted in this world, he set himself to enjoy it after his fashion. "It is a most miserable state," observes Bishop Wilson, "for a man to have every thing according to his desire, and quietly to enjoy the pleasures of life. There needs no more to expose him to eternal misery."

Certainly his prosperity was no blessing either to himself or others. He only lived *to himself* and *for himself*. Gradually he withdrew from the society of the neighbourhood ; then reduced the number of his servants, lived poorly, and rarely stirred abroad. As years rolled on, the love of money increased ; and ere he was an old man, all the melancholy eccentricities of a confirmed miser were developed in his character.

I never saw him but once, and that was when I called upon him (now grown infirm and feeble) soon after my taking possession of the living of Yateshull. As he never admitted a stranger within his doors, I had to wait in the court-yard till he came out to speak to me ; and when he

came, such a spectacle of dirt and misery I certainly had never beheld.

Lame with rheumatism, (for it was not his habit to allow a fire to be lighted in his house, and his meals were cooked at a neighbouring cottage,) he approached me with a halting, shambling gait, and, in a shrill, grating voice, asked who I was, and what I wanted. His little, red, bleared eyes shot forth doubt and mistrust, while a sharp peaked nose almost meeting a high, thin, projecting lower lip unnaturally depressed at the corners, gave his countenance a sinister and revolting expression. I answered him by saying, that, as the new vicar of Yates-hull, I thought it my duty to pay my personal respects to all my parishioners,—himself among the rest. He was “obliged to me,” he said; “but he was an old man, and did not desire to make new acquaintances: he was an old man, and wished to be left in quiet, without the intrusion of visitors.”

There was, of course, no answer to be made to such a speech; so I was about to make my bow and leave him. “Stop, sir,” said he, “as you are here, I may just mention that the *modus* of one pound sixteen shillings and eightpence on Baggesden Mill will be paid you half-yearly by my attorney, Mr. Grindall; and if you have any business to settle, go to him instead of me. But hark ye, sir, I shall resist the payment of small tithes on the Rock-bottom intakes. I never would pay your predecessor, and I shan’t pay you. Good morning to you!” So saying, he turned on his heel, and disappeared through a small door, which he locked, and bolted, and chained after him.

[It was not many months after this, that I heard that a

gang of burglars had broken into the old man's house: they had filed away the stanchions on the outside of one of the lower windows, cut through the shutters with a centre-bit, unfastened the bars, and effected an entry. But they only found themselves in an empty room secured with double doors, both locked; and before they could force their way through them, an alarm had been given; and they were forced to decamp without taking with them a shilling's worth of property.

But they effectually and for ever disturbed the wretched old man's feelings of security. His nightly rest (as I afterwards learned) was wholly broken, and he used to wander hour after hour along his lonely passages, through many a chilly winter's night, starting at the sound of his breath, and anticipating burglars in every blast which made doors creak or windows rattle.

“ Along the silent room he stalks,
Looks back and trembles as he walks;
Each lock and ev'ry bolt he tries—
In ev'ry nook and corner pries;”

and perhaps only retires to bed when day begins to dawn. In spite of all his precautions, however, it was decreed that Gideon Bagges should be despoiled of the gold wherein he trusted. In the confusion which subsequent events produced, it was never clearly ascertained by whom the burglary was effected; but it was generally supposed that a man who was well acquainted with the premises (a discharged servant of bad character) had suggested the plan, if he did not personally accomplish

the robbery. Be this as it may, not many months after the former unsuccessful attempt, some person managed to get into the house unobserved during the day time, and to conceal himself in one of the uninhabited rooms till night, (a thing by no means difficult in a house where almost all the windows had been bricked up to save the window-tax,) when he admitted others of his gang at the little postern already alluded to, and contrived, without disturbing any one, to carry off cash and jewels (which had belonged to the late Mrs. Bagges) to the amount of many hundred pounds.

The first sight that greeted the cowman's eyes, on coming from the village in the morning, was the house door wide open, and an iron-bound box, with the lid torn from the hinges and rifled of its contents, lying upon the horse-block.

Upon being made acquainted with his loss, Mr. Bagges became like one beside himself: he raved, he stormed, he swore, and anon threw himself passionately into a chair, and wept like a child. At first he was all anxiety to have the aid of the police, and vowed that he would give any sum, all he had in the world, for the apprehension of the culprits. By and by, however, as his agitation somewhat subsided, he began to talk about the folly of throwing good money after bad; and then, on the instant, the thought seemed to take possession of his mind, that if he admitted any of his neighbours to see how the robbery had been effected, or told them the amount of what had been taken, it would not be easy to conceal from them that a good deal more was still left. In short, the poor miser knew not what to do.

Fear, and suspicion, and vexation at his loss, and the hope of regaining the stolen property, alternately agitated his mind.

The report of the misfortune which had befallen him soon spread far and wide, and more than 'one of the neighbouring magistrates and gentry kindly rode over to volunteer their services; but Mr. Bagges would see none of them. The only step he took, as night came on, was to desire that the cowman should sleep in the house; for hitherto an old deaf housekeeper had been its only inmate besides himself.

Accordingly, in the evening the cowman came to sleep there; but sleep he could not; for all night long he heard his master roaming about the house, opening the doors and shutting them, undrawing the bolts and drawing them, moaning and talking to himself. At four o'clock in the morning he got up, and found Mr. Bagges still dressed, sitting in the kitchen, very pale and very cold. He had not been in bed all night, and had had a shivering fit, he said, but was better.

The cowman urged him to go to bed; day was breaking, and Mrs. Brigland, the housekeeper, would be getting up. The old man thanked him with more kindness of manner than was his wont, and John Deakin went to his cows; but there had been something unusual in his master's voice or appearance, which gave the honest fellow a misgiving about him, and in a couple of hours he returned to the hall. The housekeeper was busy with her poultry. Had she seen Mr. Bagges? No; he was still in bed. That was unusual; but, no doubt, he was very weary. An hour passed away; they grew uneasy.

Another hour elapsed ; something must be wrong. They proceeded to his bedchamber—knocked at the door ; no answer ; knocked again—still no answer ; they entered it, and there they found their wretched master stretched upon his bed, but in a position which at once precluded all idea of his being alive.

It was even so. The cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches had done their work ; and Gideon Bagges had left his gold behind him, and was gone to render his terrible account for the talents which had been committed to his trust.

In their awe and dismay at this unexpected catastrophe, the servants of the deceased immediately sent down to Yateshull for the medical attendant and myself. The presence of neither of us could be of any avail to a dead man ; but we both hurried to Baggesden, and reached it at the same moment. Mr. Hodgson was conducted at once to the chamber of death, while I awaited his return in the dilapidated kitchen, endeavouring, as best I could, to console the horror-stricken housekeeper. In a few minutes he came back, confirming the intelligence that life was utterly extinct, and had been so for at least two hours. There was, therefore, no use in our remaining longer on the spot ; so having ascertained that Mr. Grindall, the attorney, had been summoned, and having charged the servants to admit no one till his arrival, we returned to our respective homes.

Meanwhile the neighbourhood was quite in a state of excitement to learn who was the heir to the Baggesden property. Was there a will ? Who would be heir-at-law if there was not ? Was there any likelihood that

Mr. Bagges had left all his money to a public charity ? These questions, and twenty more of similar import, together with all manner of absurd surmises about "hoards of untold gold," passed from mouth to mouth ; but nobody knew any thing for certain, and Mr. Grindall was mute as a fish.

Six days after his sudden death, the body of Gideon Bagges was borne to the vault of his ancestors, attended by three or four distant connexions, as many tenants, and one or two of the neighbouring gentry. As soon as the service was ended, the lawyer suggested that I should accompany the rest of the party to Baggesden, to be present at the opening of the will ; and I, nothing loth, (for I could not help feeling curious as to its contents,) acceded to his proposal.

The measured tread of the returning funeral train gave me ample time, as I approached it, to contemplate the dilapidated condition of Baggesden Hall. It was, indeed, the very abode of penury and wretchedness. The road of approach, grass-grown, and diminished to a foot-track, was, in more than one place, choked up by a tree which the wind had uprooted, and the path wound round the obstruction, which no one cared to remove. On entering what had once been the garden, the eye lost itself in the tangled mass of briars and weeds. The yew-trees that surrounded it,—once the boast of topiarian art,—had now almost lost the fastastic forms into which they had been carefully fashioned of yore. Unpruned espaliers had shot up into tall trees ; the few ornamental plants which yet remained lay straggling on the margin of the walks, while some stunted cabbages, and a patch

of potato-ground, were the only evidence that a spade had broken the soil for years. In more than one instance, the stone vases had fallen or been removed from their pedestals; and at the bottom of one vista, enclosed by hedges of (no longer clipped) hornbeam, was a summer-house, the roof of which was lying on its floor.

The exterior of the mansion itself was in melancholy keeping with the rest of the scene of desolation. Two-thirds of the windows (as I have already mentioned) were bricked up; the paint had peeled off the doors and sills; the pipes, which should have carried off the water from the roof, were choked, and refused to do their duty, and the walls, in consequence, were in many places green and discoloured by the damp.

At our approach, the front door, which had probably been locked for years, was thrown open, and we entered a handsome hall, panelled with wainscot. A cloud of gnats danced forth into the sunshine as air was admitted into the long-closed room, and we threaded our way amid piles of fleeces, the produce of the last year's shearing, heaps of withered apples peeping from their straw, and wreaths of suspended onions. Each of these abominations separately,—the greasy, rancid effluvia of the wool, or the mellowness of the apples, or the pungency of the onions,—would have been unpleasant enough; but their commingled odours, amid the fusty closeness of an apartment which had remained unoccupied for scores of unventilated years, were almost insupportable; and we hurried on through one dark passage after another, till we came to the apartment which Mr. Bagges had occupied as his sitting-room. Here we took our chairs, while

Mr. Grindall made an oration of considerable length, (apparently for no other purpose than that of keeping those who were the nearest kinsfolk to the deceased on the tenter-hooks of expectation,) the purport of the said oration being, that he had little doubt that his worthy, though eccentric patron had made a will ; indeed, that he himself had drawn up several for him in the course of the last ten years,—one, more especially, about eighteen months since.

Mr. Grindall then proceeded to make a search ; looking in the most likely places first, probably because he felt quite sure that *there* he should not find it. Next, the more unusual depositories for such a document were successively scrutinized, and with various success ; for instance, from a brocaded petticoat (in the bottom drawer of a chest full of old-fashioned female apparel) dropped a testamentary paper, by which the testator bequeathed his whole property to the county hospital ; but this was neither signed nor sealed : in a cracked punchbowl, which surmounted a beaufet, were the fragments of a second will ; and at the bottom of a snuff-jar those of a third. These had been successively drawn up in favour of two persons with whom the miser had afterwards quarrelled, (the one for wearing gloves, the other for marrying a lady with no fortune,) and which were thus summarily revoked.

These documents being laid aside, a fresh search commenced ; for Mr. Grindall assured us that a will of later date had been executed, and, as he forcibly remarked, “ If it is not destroyed, it must be somewhere.” For an hour more the same sort of process was continued

but no vestige of any such writing appeared; and Mr. Grindall himself was about to give up the matter in despair, when his clerk, happening to look into the closet from whence the snuff-jar had been drawn forth, cast his eyes upon the parchment in which the old miser was wont to moisten his snuff—the only luxury he allowed himself; and there, sure enough, brown, and crumpled, and redolent of “old Cuba,” was the very document for which we were searching.

It was a moment of intense anxiety, perhaps, to some in the room, who might not unreasonably suppose that they had claims on the regard of the deceased; but if it was so, their hopes were doomed to disappointment.

The will, which was as short as possible, declared on the part of the testator, that he appointed Nicholas Grindall, gent, his sole executor, and that, after the payment of two or three small legacies, every thing of which he died possessed was to descend to his cousin, Tindal Flint, Esq., of Weymouth, in the county of Dorset, “the only one of his relations who had neither frowned on him nor fawned on him,”—upon these two conditions: first, that he would rebuild Baggesden Hall, “now much dilapidated,” according to certain plans and specifications to be found in the escritoire in the red parlour, (for the old miser, though he would not keep his paternal abode in repair, loved it too well not to insist jealously on its reconstruction;) and, secondly, that he, the said Tindal Flint, should reside in the aforesaid mansion for two months in every year at the very least.

Here, then, was the mystery solved. A person who

had been quite overlooked, whom nobody in the room knew, whom nobody had thought about, was the heir of Baggesden. Some faces looked very blank at the announcement ; but there was nothing to be done. The will was perfectly formal and valid ; not so much as a flaw in the dotting of an *i* or the crossing of a *t* could be detected ; and what was more, the disposition of the property was one which nobody had a right to find fault with. It was (strange to say !) a very just will ; for Mr. Flint, who had never troubled himself about Gideon Bagges and his affairs, was in as close a degree of affinity to him as any person then living.

And so the assembled mourners had nothing further to do, than to eat their luncheon "with what appetite they had," put on their hats, and wish one another good morning.

Two persons alone lingered ; Mr. Grindall and myself. The former was waiting for the chaise and four in which he was to start for Weymouth ; while I remained for a few moments to intercede that the old crone of a housekeeper, who was expecting a summary dismissal, might be allowed to remain in charge of the house, till Mr. Flint's wishes on the subject should be known.

The request was granted, and the lawyer was gone, and I, reflecting on the awful lessons which the events of the last few days was calculated to convey, was wending my way homewards ; but as I proceeded leisurely round the mansion, I observed, over the south porch, an object which I had never been near enough to examine closely before. It was an ancient sun-dial, adorned with heraldic devices and grotesque emblems of mortality,

carved in stone according to the style which prevailed at the close of the sixteenth century. On a scroll above it was inscribed, "Homfrie and Elianor Bagges, A. D. 1598;" and beneath it, in smaller, but still very legible characters, the following rhyme :

GIVE GOD THY HEART, THY HOPES, THY GIFTS, THY GOLD :
THE DAY WEARS ON ; THE TIMES ARE WAXING OLD.

"Ah!" thought I to myself, as I read the words, "what a warning was this (if he would only have applied it to himself) to him whom we have just laid in his grave!—'Give God thy gold!' Happy indeed would it have been for him if he had done so! And the words were daily before his eyes, and yet he heeded them not! Miserable at having lost his money! more miserable still in having ever possessed it! How fearfully does his history corroborate all that Scripture says of the tremendous dangers and responsibilities of wealth! and what an awful reflection it is, that not the *love* of riches only, but the very *possession* of them, is spoken of as destructive; that not those who *trust* in them only, but those who *have* them, are in more than ordinary peril of becoming cast-aways! Perhaps such an extreme case as that of Gideon Bagges may be comparatively rare; but are we not *all* in the present day, from the highest class to the lowest, from the richest to the poorest, more or less making idols of our money? Loving, instead of fearing to have it? Counting how little, instead of how much we need give to God? And if we are not yet so unhappy as to have become very hard, and greedy, and worldly, by its influence, are we not in the habit of yielding, without

thinking, to the spirit of the age ; assuming all things to be necessary which the world thinks necessary, and the habits of society encourage ; and thus are we not continually spending on display, on frivolities, on luxuries, on self-indulgence, money which God has given us for other purposes, and for the embezzlement whereof He will surely call us to account ? ‘ Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolations !’ Were ever words more terrible than those ? Surely, there is but one condition in which riches are not a hurt to the owner thereof. It is when they are received with godly fear, and sanctified as the means of daily self-denial.”





The Welf and his Friends.

Stranger. Sure this is better
Than a great hedge of yew, making it look
All the year round like winter, and for ever
Dropping its poisonous leaves from the under boughs
Wither'd and bare.

Old Man. Ay ! so the new squire thinks ;
And pretty work he makes of it ! What 'tis
To have a stranger come to an old house !

Stranger. It seems you know him not ?

Old Man. No, sir, not I.
They tell me he's expected daily now ;
But in my lady's time he never came
But once, for they were very distant kin.

SOUTHEY.





CHAPTER II.

WITHIN a fortnight after the events recorded in the last chapter, Mr. Tindal Flint had made his appearance at Baggesden Hall; and the curiosity of his neighbours at Yateshull was once more excited in no inconsiderable degree with respect to the heir of Gideon Bagges. What was his age? was he married or single? was he good-looking? what were his tastes, habits, disposition?—These and many more such questions agitated the mind of the public; that is to say, of such persons as had not much else to think about: but, unhappily for them, they were doomed to fresh disappointments.

Mr. Flint was so wholly occupied with his lawyer for the first week he was at Baggesden, that he hardly ever set his foot out of doors; during the second, every day was devoted to the architect and the bailiff; and early in the third he was in London, on his way back to Weymouth.

Very provoking conduct, certainly; very tantalizing to an inquisitive neighbourhood: but there was no help for it. Miss Burr had been fortunate enough to see him through a gap in the hedge, when he was walking with the new gamekeeper to the duck-clump; and had decided

that he was very good-looking, though a trifle too broad across the shoulders. The deaf old housekeeper, on whom he bestowed a comfortable retiring pension, was satisfied that he was "a very nice gentleman. But, to be sure, his money had come he didn't know how; and it was *her* opinion that it would go he didn't know how, with such a waste of good fuel and butcher's meat every day! She never saw the like of it! why couldn't he live as her old master had lived?" And such of his neighbours as had left their cards with him were inclined to form a favourable opinion of him, when they received a very civil message, with the assurance that he would take the earliest opportunity of waiting on them at his speedy return to Baggesden, and only regretted that indispensable business forced him to hurry up to London.

But that speedy return was indefinitely delayed; and when the good folks of Yateshull saw scaffolding erected round Baggesden Hall, and the roof and walls of the old mansion gradually disappearing, their patience found a fresh trial in the inevitable conclusion, that Mr. Flint was not likely at present to take up his residence among us; since he had no longer a house in which he could reside.

In the course of a year or two, however, a spruce new villa, with a Grecian portico, and a handsome conservatory, had sprung up on the site of the former dilapidated mansion. Barns and cow-houses had disappeared, and their place was occupied by shrubberies. Terraces and formal parterres had been smoothed into an expanse of lawn; and the landscape-gardener had laid out the grounds according to the prevailing fashion. A billiard-table arrived from London; the stables were filled with

hunters; and an establishment of keepers, and under-keepers, and watchers, was set up, at the cost of about £500 a year, for the preservation of game which might, perhaps, be worth £25.

Under such circumstances there could be no longer any reasonable doubt that Mr. Flint was coming to reside at Baggesden; he would be there for the hunting season; and when he had once taken up his abode there, he would find it such a charming place that he would live there entirely. So it was expected at Yateshull; but once more expectation was doomed to disappointment.

Mr. Flint, indeed, arrived at Baggesden early in October; filled his house with a succession of male friends; hunted, shot, and played at billiards, for precisely two calendar months, (the necessary time of residence prescribed by the will of Gideon Bagges,) but early in December he took his departure. And this plan he followed invariably for ten or twelve years—keeping his annual residence of a couple of months, and migrating as regularly as the swallows do.

The consequence of this was, that at the end of those years I knew very little more of Mr. Flint personally than I had known at the commencement of them. And, to say truth, from all I saw and heard, I was not sorry that his annual stay among us was very limited; for even if Mr. Flint and his friends had been wholly unobjectionable persons, his own household and his friends' servants could by no means come under such a designation.

Nobody who has not traced its effects can imagine the amount of evil which may be brought into a quiet country village by the domestics of a large establishment.

Even under the most favourable circumstances, where the master of the family is a so-called respectable man, and professes to look at something beyond the mere question, whether or no his servants are attending to his interests, it is to be feared, that in the majority of instances he can know very little about them. He summons them to family-prayers morning and evening, and takes care that they shall have the opportunity of attending public worship; and so far, of course, it is well, though he could scarce do less, unless he were a heathen. But what does he know of his domestics in their hours of idleness?—and many such hours they contrive to find. In many cases, probably, drinking, swearing, gaming, and all manner of profligacy, together with wastefulness and dishonesty, are going on under his very eye, while he is unconscious of it, and perhaps flatters himself that few households are so orderly as his own! And if this be so where a wealthy master pays, or attempts to pay, some attention to the moral condition of his servants, what is it likely to be in the case of one who cares for none of these things; who is indifferent to even external decency; whose household is under no orderly regulation; and who, provided he is well served himself, leaves all other matters to chance?

And who, under such circumstances, can wonder that the carelessness or wickedness which is exhibited above stairs is imitated below; that the profaneness, or scandal, or uncleanness, which is received with laughter and applause at the dining table, is retailed with equal zest, and only a little more coarseness, in the kitchen? Who can wonder, if those who know better disgrace their Christian

calling, whether by word or bad example, that they will find plenty of followers among the ignorant and uneducated ? that the under-servants copy what the upper-servants have learned from their superiors in rank ? and that thence the corruption extends itself downwards to the humblest dependents of the family,—the labourers and their children ? This is no unreal or exaggerated picture. Would to God it were ! But, alas ! when the rich men and the mighty of this money-loving, money-getting country, have to render their fearful account of all their luxuries, and worldliness, and self-indulgence, and proud contempt of the Church and her ordinances, it is much to be feared that the spiritual neglect of their overgrown households (no longer, as of old, specially intrusted to a chaplain's watchful eye) will make a terrible item among their sins of omission,—among those things wherein they *might* have consulted God's glory, and the welfare of those within the sphere of their influence, but wherein they *did not* !

The household at Baggesden seemed (with one exception—an old, white-headed man, who was evidently rather a friend than a servant, and who was nominally Mr. Flint's own attendant) to be thoroughly ill-conditioned. Nobody looked after them ; and the natural result followed—they were a set of saucy, pampered menials, whose idleness and dissoluteness made them a nuisance to the neighbourhood.

It was the misconduct of one of these worthies which first brought me to a personal acquaintance with Mr. Flint. This man, a head groom, made it his boast, (as we afterwards learned,) that he had never hitherto lived

in any family which he had not *reformed*, and that he should certainly reform Mr. Flint's. His first step in the course of reformation was the introduction of cock-fighting. This was bad enough; but when he proceeded to carry his reforming principles into my parish, and, surrounded with a crowd of lubberly ploughboys, actually proceeded to fight a main of cocks on the village-green during the hours of divine service one Sunday afternoon, I thought it high time to interfere, and put a stop to his plans of parochial emendation.

Accordingly the next morning I proceeded to Baggesden Hall, was admitted, and shown into a vacant room, where in a few moments Mr. Flint joined me. He was at that time about five or six and thirty years of age, tall, well-formed, and handsome, with intelligent features, and that sort of reckless, nonchalant expression in his countenance, which a man is apt to have who troubles himself with little beyond his pleasures, takes his own way, and lets the world go as it will. There was a twinkle in his laughing eye which bespoke the thoughtless, jovial companion; and his brown, healthy complexion told its tale of manly exercise, and exposure to all weathers.

He received me with easy gentlemanlike courtesy, and in a voice of remarkable sweetness spoke of his satisfaction in having at length made my acquaintance. Proceeding to tell him the object with which I had called upon him, and the points on which I desired the exertion of his authority, I found an attentive listener, and (somewhat to my surprise) a very indignant one, as the details of his servant's conduct were set before him. As soon as I had done speaking, he rang the bell, summoned the

man into his presence, heard with impatience his half-sulky, half-saucy excuses, and dismissed him on the spot.

"Scoundrel!" he exclaimed, as he paced backwards and forwards with all the vehemence of an angry man—"scoundrel! what business had he to be away from the stables, when he knew I was likely to want the horses? and if he wasn't at the stables, why didn't he go to church? I assure you, Mr. Warlingham, I consider it a very right and proper thing that the servants should go to church, and be taught to be sober, and honest, and industrious, and all that. I am sure some of my idle vagabonds would be the better for such a lesson, and I wish with all my soul, Mr. Warlingham, you would teach it them."

"I am quite ready, sir, to do my part; but I fear I can do little without your assistance."

"Oh, for matter of that, I will order every man Jack of them to church from this time forward; and if you'll only tell me which of them doesn't make his appearance there, I'll make short work of him, I promise you."

"Ah, sir," I replied, "it is not exactly in that manner that I would ask your assistance. What I want is the help of your example."

Mr. Flint coloured, but said nothing; so I continued: "Excuse my speaking so freely, but you know my commission extends to high as well as low; and as the opportunity of addressing you occurs but rarely, allow me to ask, whether, if your own attendance at church were more regular, there would not be more hope that there

would be fewer instances of the sin of Sabbath-breaking in your household? If the master does not hold it to be a *privilege* that he can go to church, are not the servants likely to forget even that it is a *duty*?"

"Why, upon my word, Mr. Warlingham, I believe I have been rather irregular," (Mr. Flint had only been twice at church, and that in the afternoon, since his arrival at Baggesden six weeks previously;) "but then church-time is so early here," (morning service commenced at eleven o'clock,) "and Yateshull Church is so far off," (it was less than a mile;) "and then I have had guests staying in the house; and—and—in short, it has been impossible; but I will see what can be done to meet your wishes."

"Say rather to honour God, and benefit yourself; for to that point my wishes tend."

"Well, well, we will see what can be done." I rose to depart. "No, no, Mr. Warlingham; now you are here, I cannot allow you to run away from me so speedily. It is just luncheon-time; do come and have some refreshment." Then seeing me hesitate, he added, "We shall be quite uninterrupted—not a soul in the house but my friend Warne,—one of the best creatures that ever lived—near neighbour of mine at Weymouth—young man—baronet—member of parliament—one of the oldest families in Dorsetshire."

I had no great inclination to stay; but, on the whole, it seemed best to do so, and therefore I followed my host into another room, where a handsome luncheon was set out for three or four persons. As we entered the room, a gentleman who was seated in an arm-chair by the

fire with his back towards us, laid down his book and rose.

Mr. Flint seemed for a moment to hesitate whether or no he would proceed further into the room. "You here, Mandevyl?" he then said; "I thought you were gone out riding."

"I like warmth better than cold, and the fireside better than one of your English fogs," replied the party addressed, with a look out of the window.

"Where's Warne?"

"Gone with the bailiff to calculate the weight of tallow on your prize ox, and to see them ring the pigs, or some such intellectual amusement."

"Mr. Warlingham," said Mr. Flint, addressing himself to me, "allow me to introduce you to Mr. Mandevyl; Mandevyl, Mr. Warlingham, the vicar of Yateshull,—*my friend*," continued Mr. Flint, with a marked emphasis on the last words.

A momentary smile passed over Mr. Mandevyl's face, and was succeeded by an expression of countenance contemptuous and ironical, while he made me a low bow, and said a few words of common-place civility. Two things were evident; Mr. Flint was a little afraid of Mr. Mandevyl, and Mr. Mandevyl had no particular desire to be on intimate terms with me. The sort of instinct which makes one shudder at a venomous reptile, gave me at first sight a strong repugnance to him. To be sure, there was nothing peculiarly engaging in his exterior. Though a young man, he had already the stoop of age, and there was none of the vigour or buoyancy of youth about him; his blood seemed stagnating under his yel-

low skin; his strongly marked features, and downcast eyes of greenish gray, rendered his countenance strikingly repulsive, even without its usual accompaniment of a sneer. His limbs seemed ill put on, and his gait was more like that of an ill-stuffed bird than a human being; for his body was thrown so much forward that his legs seemed unequal to support it. It afterwards occurred to me that this unhappy young man (for the peevish discontented expression of his features showed him to be that) was a person of whom I had heard a year or two before, when spending a few days in the University of —, as having carried off the highest public honours, and as having become subsequently notorious for the adoption of skeptical opinions. I soon found out that I was right in my suspicions; for while I was eating my luncheon, Mr. Flint was indiscreet enough to say, "You seem very much occupied with your book, Mandevyl?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Mandevyl, without taking his eyes from the volume; "I am weighing some pithy remarks of a worthy namesake of yours, one Matthew Tindal. Was he a relation, or only a friend of the family?"

"Indeed I don't know," said Mr. Flint quite innocently; "I never heard of him or his book before. Is it mine?"

"I took it from your library," answered Mr. Mandevyl.

"Ah, one of old Bagges's no doubt. He had a vast many books in presses at the top of the house; though I suspect he did not often trouble them. When I fitted up the library, I had all those in decent bindings, and which had escaped the rats and the damp, unpacked and brought

into the daylight; but I cannot say I know much about them. Well, what does your friend Tindal tell you?"

"Why, that Balaam's ass must have been a very extraordinary ass indeed, and possessed of no small stock of ideas, since she was able to reason with her master about it, when she saw and knew the angel. To be sure, the whole story is rather staggering to ordinary apprehensions; but I dare say *your friend* Mr. Warlingham sees no difficulty."

"A great miracle," said I, "but no difficulty. But, in the first place, the facts are incorrectly stated by your author. If you will take the trouble to look at the Bible, you will find, indeed, that 'the Lord opened the mouth of the ass,' and that articulate sounds came forth, but not one word is said of her knowing the meaning of them, or of her reasoning, or of her ideas. She was probably able to utter the sounds just as a parrot would have done, without understanding them. So, again, the Bible says that she 'saw' the angel; but there is not one syllable about her knowing him. Pray, sir, are you an admirer of Tindal?"

"I am an admirer," answered Mr. Mandevyl, "of all men who dare to use their own reason, and inquire boldly into the truth."

"*Truth*, then, is the object of your inquiries?"

"Certainly it is."

"If that be the case," I answered, "you have, no doubt, now to learn for the first time, and will be proportionably glad to hear, that Tindal's wretched sophistries and wilful misrepresentations of holy Scripture were fully and satisfactorily answered as soon as published."

Mr. Mandevyl looked as if he could have killed me ; but he said nothing, and I proceeded. "It is, of course, much to be lamented that you should ever have allowed yourself to read such a book when you were once aware of its contents. Nothing can be worse for your own mind, or more offensive to God. However, you will, I hope, lose no time in making yourself acquainted with the work to which I allude—Dr. Waterland's 'Scripture Vindicated.' It will remove your doubts, and show you the danger of listening to *ex parte* statements. And further, sir, when you have read it, I feel sure that you will, as a candid inquirer, take care never to bring forward again objections which have been refuted ; and if, unfortunately, you should ever hear others doing so, you will give them a proper answer."

"Oh, that must depend," replied Mr. Mandevyl haughtily, "upon my admitting that they are refuted. What does he say, for instance, to Mr. Tindal's remarks upon Balaam's ass ?"

"Very much what I have already said to you ; for I had his remarks in my mind when I answered you."

"Does he al o that the ass had many ideas ?" asked Mr. Mandevyl in a sneering tone.

"His opinion, sir, is, that Balaam's ass had as many ideas as asses commonly have ; and what that number is, he expressly leaves to Mr. Tindal to count at his leisure, and for his own amusement."

Mr. Mandevyl bit his lips and was silent. Apparently, however, he had had enough of the subject ; for, without saying another word, he turned on his heel, and left the room.

"Answer a fool," saith Solomon, "according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit." I was angry with myself for replying to Mr. Mandevyl in any thing approaching to his own style, and yet, perhaps, there was no other way so effectual of checking him in his profaneness. How miserable, after all, thought I, as he quitted the apartment, are the cavils which scoffers bring against the word of God! how deplorable, how disgraceful to human nature, to think that the objections with which they endeavour to unsettle the minds of the ignorant and unwary, have been answered again and again, and yet, knowing this, they continue to reproduce them!

I had no time for further reflection; for the door had scarcely closed upon Mr. Mandevyl, when it opened again: a young man hastily entered, and, without noticing me, (who happened to be concealed from his view by the folds of a screen,) exclaimed, "Why, hey-day, Flint! what's the matter now? Martin Gale stops me in the stable-yard, to tell me you have turned him off at a moment's warning; and Bob Mandevyl meets me in the passage, looking black as night and fierce as ten furies, and says you have got a parson into the house on purpose to insult him."

Mr. Flint, who was a very good-natured man, looked quite distressed at this untoward speech; but I suppose an involuntary smile on my part reassured him, and he introduced me to Sir Luke Warne.

"Why, I'll tell you, Luke," he continued, "how the case stands. I find that Martin Gale, besides laming the chestnut filly, has been cockfighting on a Sunday under Mr. Warlingham's windows—both of them pretty

strong measures on his part, I think ;—so the sooner he's off the better. And as for Mandevyl, he is old enough and impudent enough to fight his own battles ; but a poorer figure than he cut in the last I never saw. And, mark you, it was *he* who commenced the attack, not Mr. Warlingham."

"Well then," said Sir Luke, "I hope he got a good 'blowing-up' for his pains. I'm for every man holding his own opinions, without let or hinderance ; but that's no reason why he should obtrude them upon other people ; and I know of old that master Mandevyl is apt to go rather too far."

"Especially when he questions the truth of revelation," said I.

"To be sure—to be sure," replied the baronet, in a somewhat patronizing tone,—I really don't see what people would be at, or what they gain by trying to disbelieve the Bible. I trust I am as free from intolerance and bigotry as most people ; but still I own I have not much respect for your deists : they are too fond of their own opinions,—think nobody knows any thing but themselves. With our fellow-Christians, indeed, of all sects and opinions, I think we are bound to hold communion. Sink all the minor differences, say I. I am a Churchman myself ; but I live as much with Dissenters as Churchmen.

'For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight ;
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.*

"That's my doctrine, Mr. Warlingham."

"I am sorry to hear it, sir," I replied ; "for it is not

* Essay on Man, iii. 305.

the doctrine of that Bible which exhorts us earnestly to contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints; otherwise the Church of England would not in her articles pronounce those '*accursed*' who 'presume to say that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law and the light of nature.'"

"Sir, I protest I never heard of such an article before; and I think it the height of illiberality."

"Surely, sir, as a Churchman, and a man of education, you must know what are the articles of faith prescribed by that Church with which you profess to hold communion?"

"Why, upon my word, Mr. Warlingham, I don't think I have read the articles since I left Brazennose; and, to confess the honest truth, I don't believe I read much of them there; for the divinity-lecture often fell on a hunting morning; and I was more apt to go to cover than to the lecture-room."

"But you studied them eventually for your degree?"

"Why, Mr. Warlingham, my Oxford studies came to their close rather abruptly. Marry, how and why, the proctors knew better than I did: but if, as you say, the articles are so intolerant, I wish they would reform them, or get rid of them. I have long thought that we should get on much better without them."

"But as you admit, Sir Luke, that you have not studied the articles, is it not just possible that you may be rather indiscreet in thus condemning them?"

"Oh, upon my word, sir," replied the baronet, in a tone of indifference, "I cannot pretend to discuss the

matter theologically,—indeed, I make it a rule to avoid polemics ; independently of their being exciting, and irritating, and all that, they only tend to fill one's mind with prejudice, and bigotry, and party-bias, and so cramp the charities of life. I am a citizen of the world, I flatter myself ; and as such, Mr. Warlingham, I should think it shame to brand a fellow-citizen with the name either of hireling or heretic. I would be well with all parties ; and where I can harmonize in principles, I will not differ for punctilios."

"And you would so designate the points insisted on in the articles?" said I.

"I don't know for that exactly ; because, as I told you, I am not very well read in them ; but I belong to the Protestant religion——"

"What is that?" I asked, feeling that the profession was of the vaguest, and scarcely anticipating the extent of his liberality.

Sir Luke did not heed the question, but proceeded—
"I belong to the Protestant religion ; and I therefore look on Protestants of all denominations as so nearly united with me in sentiment, that I do not stop to inquire into minor points of difference. And further, Mr. Warlingham, I am a Christian ; and so, although a Protestant, I do not forget that Roman Catholics are Christians too ; and, therefore, why should I bother myself with the petty controversies which have been the cause of disunion between the adherents of one common Christianity?"

"Well put, Luke!" cried Mr. Flint triumphantly ; "I love to hear such liberal, generous sentiments as these."

"Indeed," said I, interposing, "I must confess that Sir

Luke has disappointed me; he has stopped short just where I expected him to go forward. He has spoken of himself as a Protestant and a Christian; but after all, what are these but party-names and petty distinctions? Is he not a member of a yet larger family? Has he forgotten that he is a *man*? Has he forgotten that

‘One touch of nature makes the whole world kin?’

that the same sun which shines on him shines likewise on the Buddhist, the Mahometan, and the worshipper of Fo? Why should he enter upon the immaterial question, whether Mahomet was an impostor, or Fo or Buddha are mere idols? why should controversies on such points as these disunite and divide the human race?

Sir Luke stared for a moment, as if puzzled, for hitherto I had spoken with much gravity; but when I saw the expression of his face, I could keep my countenance no longer, and thereupon the baronet burst into a hearty laugh.

“Eh? what, you are quizzing me, are you, Mr. Warlingham?” he said: “well, well, it is better to laugh than to fight about such matters. But for all your laughing, you may rely upon it, I am not far from wrong. I don’t mean that there are not many worthy, respectable people of your way of thinking—(we *must* make allowance for prejudice and early impressions;)—but the world is arriving at true principles; illiberality and bigotry are on their death-beds; and it will soon be universally acknowledged among philanthropists, that all opinions are true to those who think them true.”

“And that therefore in state-policy all are to be equally encouraged?” said I.

"Exactly so," replied Sir Luke; "this is the sentiment of men of the most enlightened minds among us. It is a great moral truth, the discovery of which is worthy of an age like ours."

"Indeed, I think so," I answered; "for we live in an age which is ready to adopt any opinion that has plausibility or expediency to recommend it; but as a *discovery*, your philanthropical sentiment is by no means new: the opinions you advocate are precisely those of the king of Siam, who, when Louis XIV. sent ambassadors and a band of missionaries to his territories, and invited him to embrace Christianity, replied, that since unity in religion depended absolutely on Providence, who could as easily have introduced that, as the diversity of sects that prevail in the world, his conclusion was, that the true God takes as much pleasure in being served one way as another; and therefore, while his Siamese majesty permitted the Jesuits to preach any thing they liked, he and his people begged to remain idolaters.* This was a very easy, comfortable way of going on, and one which, by his own showing, Sir Luke Warine would most thoroughly approve: the only objection to it that I can see is, that the Bible declares that it is by no means immaterial what men believe, and that God is not indifferent whether he is addressed as

‘Jehovah, Jove, or Lord.’

But perhaps you find no difficulty in this, Sir Luke?"

The nonchalant baronet could not but perceive the

* See a quotation from Tachard in Mosheim's *Eccl. Hist.* by Maclaine, cent. 17, sect. i. § 8.

absurdity of his position ; but what cared he ? he had a fund of imperturbable good humour, and was quite ready to laugh at himself.

“ Ah, I see you want to drive me into a corner, Mr. Warlingham, by putting an extreme case,” said he ; “ I may not be a good hand at an argument, and, indeed, I started by reminding you that I was unprepared to enter on a polemical discussion. People *will* differ ; but let me hold my opinions, and I sha’nt quarrel with yours. Every man for himself, say I. Mr. Warlingham, sooner or later you will come to be of my way of thinking : you will find liberal opinions are to you as the air you breathe ; you will say, ‘ I must have them, or die.’—Flint, my good fellow, who made those boots ? they are a very good fit.”

Of course it was vain to attempt to pursue the conversation further ; and even if I had had the opportunity, I should have only elicited a few more of Sir Luke’s commonplace plausibilities. He was one of those people who seem hardly to be aware when they have got the worst of an argument. Cool, calm, thoroughly well satisfied with himself, never put out of temper, neither troubled with any great acuteness of feeling, or fixedness of principle, he was considered a very rising man among the liberal party of the day in the House of Commons. Year after year, as member for the borough of Blackwhite, he used to get up, and with the greatest professions of kindly feeling towards the Church, endeavour to do her all the harm he could. His fallacies, indeed, were continually answered, and his misstatements exposed ; but having apologized for them one day, he revived them

in some other shape the next, still insisting on his regard for the Church, and his desire for her purity and peace, but never failing to lend his vote to those measures respecting her which were rather based on expediency than justice, and ever maintaining the opinion that it was her duty to yield till her opponents should be satisfied.

The conversation being now turned to Mr. Flint's boots, I saw no further necessity for prolonging my visit; and, having shaken hands with my host, took my leave and departed.

I returned home sad and sick at heart with all I had seen and heard. If these, and such as these, were to be the chosen inmates of Baggesden Hall, the death of Gideon Bagges was a misfortune, instead of a blessing. To be sure, I had no great fault to find personally with Mr. Flint; but it was evident that he was worldly and unprincipled; and how could I hope to gain an influence with him, while his stay among us was so short, and he was surrounded with such companions? He seemed to have many good points; was kind-hearted, gentleman-like, and too refined not to be disgusted with the glaring impropriety of Mr. Mandevyl's conduct. Above all, he had submitted to hear the truth without losing his temper. There were at least therefore *some* grounds of hope that I might sooner or later be of service to him. But "evil communications corrupt good manners."



An Unexpected Disclosure.

Hating himself at every step he takes,
His mind approves the virtue he forsakes,
And yet forsakes her. O! how sharp the pain,
Our vice, ourselves, our habits to disdain;
To go where never yet in peace we went,
To feel our hearts can bleed, yet not relent;
To sigh, yet not recede; to grieve, yet not repent!

CRABBE.





CHAPTER III.

MR. FLINT's companions and mode of life at Baggesden Hall continued to be much the same for some years after his succession to the property. Meanwhile he became very popular with the gentlemen in the neighbourhood ; for he was affable, agreeable, and light in hand—entered into rural matters with considerable interest—had very good shooting on his estate—and gave very good dinners. With the ladies, however, he was less popular ; for it was evident that he was not a marrying man. He could laugh indeed, and chatter, and flirt with laughers, and chatteringers, and flirts ; but then his manners were just the same to every body : he made no advances, showed no preference, took no hints ; so that it was soon admitted by general consent, that to be mistress of Baggesden Hall was not among the probable prizes in the lottery of Marriage, since neither wit, beauty, nor accomplishments, could make the slightest impression on its insensible, impenetrable master.

Nor was this the least of Mr. Flint's offences : he was not only a wilful and deliberate bachelor himself ; but he contrived to monopolize the society of all the pleasantest young men in the neighbourhood, who, in spite of expos-

tulations, were found to prefer the mirth, and license, and jovial doings at Baggesden, to the dull propriety (as they considered it) of more respectable establishments. The result of this was, that by the female part of our population Mr. Flint was looked upon with rather a jealous and suspicious eye. Indeed, the four Misses Boobery (who had severally intended to marry him, and had made their intentions sufficiently manifest) were heard to declare that he was a male coquette, who could admire nothing but a good dinner, and whose inevitable fate it would be to let slip all opportunities of forming a creditable connexion, and in his dotage to marry his cook. But the Misses Boobery were not aware that his cook was a Frenchman.

Mr. Flint, meanwhile, in blissful ignorance or indifference as to what his neighbours thought or said, pursued what is called a life of pleasure,—a life, that is,

“Where pleasure never hath been found,
And never, never will.”

His existence was passed, not in the culture of his own mind ; not in the profitable use of the many talents which God had committed to him ; not in exerting the moral influence of a good example among his dependents ; not in the developement of schemes of usefulness and benevolence,—but in idleness and self-indulgence—in whatever gratified his appetites, or served to kill time.

Alas ! when did Satan ever omit the opportunity of taking possession of a heart so swept and garnished for his reception, or of making it seven-fold worse in the end than at the beginning ? The step is short between that

utter forgetfulness of God which the love of ease and comfort is sure to produce, and open denial of Him. Infidelity follows close upon the heels of luxury : for when once a man has so far set his heart upon things temporal, as that he would rather not remember the four last things—death, judgment, heaven, and hell,—he will not be indisposed to listen to the sophistries of those who would teach him, that the evidence on which revelation rests is doubtful ; and he ceases to be shocked at the thought of perverting the intellects which God has given him, while striving, through their means, to satisfy himself that there is no God. “Men,” observes South, “are atheistical, because they are first vicious ; and question the *truth* of Christianity, because they hate the *practice* ;” or, as he says elsewhere, “Men are atheists, not because they have better wits than other men, but because they have corrupter wills ; not because they reason better, but because they live worse.”

Whatever, indeed, were Mr. Flint's errors, there was this to be alleged in his excuse, that he had fewer opportunities than most persons in his class of life of knowing better ; for (as I learned in after-years, and subsequent to those events in his history which it is the object of the ensuing pages to bring before the reader) his education had been so far neglected, that all he had acquired might be said to have been self-taught. He had been humoured in his childhood ; was unchecked in his youth ; and at no period of his existence had he been subject to the guidance and advice of any judicious friend. From the hour when he was born at his father's plantation in the West Indies, he was the idol of a silly, weak, doting

mother, who almost broke through her habits of indolence and dissipation, in order that she might wait upon him, and see his every childish fancy gratified. Of course he became spoilt, and pampered, and helpless to the last degree. The consequence of this was that his health began to suffer, and eventually the physicians recommended his being sent to England. No arrangement could have been more opportune or fortunate than this, if he had been consigned to proper hands when he arrived in this country. But his maternal uncle, a London merchant, who undertook the charge of him, though a worthy man enough, was fitter to preside in a counting-house than to superintend the education of a neglected boy. He put his nephew, indeed, to a private school, then in considerable repute ; but the only result of that was, that the boy acquired a smattering of Latin, and proficiency in vice. Thence, in due course, he was removed to the care of an equally fashionable private tutor, who, for the moderate charge of £350 a year, gave him board and lodging, and just as much instruction—as he asked for ; making, moreover, very few inquiries as to the manner in which he spent his unlimited allowance.

By the time that Tindal Flint had attained his twenty-second year his father was dead, and his mother had returned to England. A tremendous hurricane, followed by a succession of bad seasons, and the subsequent general depreciation of West Indian property, had considerably reduced the family estate ; but still Mrs. Flint and her son were in sufficiently comfortable circumstances. For a short period they continued to live together at Cheltenham ; but this plan was found to suit the tastes

and habits of neither party, and ere long the young man set up a small establishment for himself in the neighbourhood of Weymouth, and only visited his mother from time to time.

Before many years had elapsed, he found himself the unexpected heir of Gideon Bagges; and then (his mother being now too infirm to leave her house) Baggesden Hall became—what an ill-conditioned bachelor's household generally becomes.

About six years after Mr. Flint had taken up his periodical residence among us, an accident occurred to him, the results of which had an important influence on his after-life. Returning from hunting in the dusk of the evening, his favourite mare got her foot into a rabbit-hole, stumbled, fell with great violence, and in her fall contrived to roll upon her rider, and to break his thigh. Fortunately—or, as I ought to have said, providentially—help was at hand; and as the circumstance occurred not many hundred yards from his own door, he was borne carefully home by his own servants. It had been his intention to quit Baggesden for the season a day or two subsequently; his party therefore had broken up, and he had no guests in the house when the accident happened. The surgeons were soon in attendance; and I had the satisfaction of hearing next morning that their patient was going on very favourably.

In a few days I was admitted, by his own desire, into his chamber.

“Glad to see you, Mr. Warlingham,” cried he, as he stretched out his hand to take mine: “I promise you I’m precious tired already with lying here on my back all

day. Don't my bones ache? that's all. And haven't these doctors tied me up with their splints and bandages, till I'm more like a mummy than a man? That ever Black Bess should have played me such a trick as this! To have carried me these three last seasons through every thing, ay, and *over* every thing, and then to have gone down on her knees for all the world as if she were a parson—(beg your pardon, sir, I forget)—gone down on her knees or her nose on level ground, and within sight of her own stall! Too bad, too bad!”

“Well, but surely there is great cause for thankfulness that matters are no worse? You might have been killed, whereas (serious as your accident is) you are going on very favourably; and probably, ere many weeks have elapsed, will be getting about again.”

“Ay, ay,” cried the impatient sufferer; “it's all very well for a man who has the use of his limbs to preach patience, and thankfulness, and all that——”

“No doubt,” said I, interrupting him, lest he should have spoken ungratefully, when he had been so mercifully preserved,—“no doubt the trial is a heavy one to a person of your active habits——”

“Heavy?” exclaimed Mr. Flint, in turn interrupting me; “I should think it is indeed! To be kept here when I wanted to be a hundred miles off, and tortured, and doctored, and fed upon slops, and nothing to do, and not a soul to speak to! I wonder what I have to be thankful for! I would rather have broken my neck at once, and been out of my misery.”

“Ah, my good sir,” said I, in a quiet soothing tone, “surely you are using words at random; you do not

think of the force of what you are saying. Are you, are we any of us, so fit for eternity, as that sudden death should be rather a thing to be hoped for than deprecated? A broken neck might, indeed, have relieved you from your present pain; but could you have *really* desired that your soul should have been hurried into the presence of its Maker and Judge, without one moment's preparation, 'unhousell'd, disappointed, unaneal'd?' It is only they to whom it has been 'Christ to live,' to whom it is 'gain to die;' and I am sure you have too much sense, too much humility, not to feel that there are very many things which you would yourself wish to be otherwise, before you stand before the tribunal of God."

"Why, certainly, Mr. Warlingham," replied the sick man, "I did speak hastily. Though, for matter of that, if I *have* been wildish, I don't see that I am at all worse than my neighbours; indeed, I flatter myself that I am a good deal better than some of them. I should scorn to do many things which men that I know do not stick at; indeed I should."

"I do not doubt it, sir," said I; "but you must bear this in mind, that when you stand at your last account, the inquiry will not be, whether you were better or worse than other men, but whether you have kept your baptismal vows; whether yours has been a life-long course of faith and obedience, and a renunciation of the devil, the world, and the flesh."

Mr. Flint groaned, and was silent. "Yours is a hard, stern creed," he added, after a short pause.

"Perhaps it seems so to you *now*," I replied. "And

under any circumstances it would be so, if we had only our own strength to rely on for the perfecting our Christian course, or only our own merits to plead at the last. But, blessed be the mercy of God, that is not the case."

"Well, Mr. Warlingham, I hope that by and by, when I get about again, I shall think more of these matters than I have hitherto done."

"Why not do so at once? There is no time like the present. Why not turn your present confinement to good account? Depend upon it, there are few places more suited to deep thought and thankfulness than a sick chamber."

"What am I to think about, Mr. Warlingham? If I was going to die, I dare say your advice would be all very good and proper; but I am not likely to die: the doctors say I may set my mind quite at ease, for that I shall do very well. I never saw any good that came of moping, and being righteous over-much."

"I neither prescribed the one nor the other. What I say is, that if you are so disposed, you may turn your present illness to good account, by making it a time of serious reflection."

"What am I to reflect upon?" asked the sick man.

"What your life has hitherto been,—what it is,—what it ought to be."

"But I don't see what is the matter with my life. I wonder where you think me so deficient," said Mr. Flint, uneasily.

"It is not my office to be your judge," I replied. "What I would recommend you is, to try yourself by the law of God. Read the sermon on the mount, for instance; and

see how far your daily habits correspond with what is there enjoined."

"Be kind enough to illustrate your meaning, Mr. Warlingham."

"Certainly. Our blessed Lord says, that no man can be His disciple who does not deny himself, and take up his cross *daily*, and follow Him. Now, then, when you read that text, you should ask yourself wherein your own life is one of daily self-denial; what it is that you give up for Christ's sake; what cross you submit to, rather than offend Him?"

Mr. Flint was staggered at this, and once more relapsed into silence; but, as before, after a short pause, he reverted to the strictness of my notions, as he termed it, and added, that it was but natural that at his time of life he should take as much pleasure as his means put within his reach. My reply was, that such a remark would be quite intelligible, if there was no life after the present; but no true follower of Christ would ever allow himself to look upon what is commonly called pleasure, with any other feeling than that of suspicion.

"But do you mean to tell me that I am to live like a monk, and give myself up to papistical fastings and methodical prayers? Why, you would only make a hypocrite of me at last. My notion is, that I shall take my chance with the rest of the world. I don't want to be better than other people. I flatter myself, that nobody can say but what I am an honourable, upright, respectable man; and being that, I don't see why I am not to live comfortably, and why I may not die well and happily,—though I hope

"I shan't die yet awhile," added Mr. Flint with a forced laugh, "in spite of you and the doctors."

"I trust not," said I, "but if when that awful hour comes, you *do* die well and happily, believe me, you must make a far different preparation for it from that which you propose at present. You think my views over-strict; but ere I leave you, let me repeat to you the words of one whom you must know by name at least, and whose opinion must needs carry weight with it. 'He that desires to die well and happily,' says Bishop Jeremy Taylor, 'above all things must be careful that he doth not live a soft, a delicate, and a voluptuous life; but a life severe, holy, and under the discipline of the cross, under the conduct of prudence and observation; a life of warfare and sober counsels, labour and watchfulness. No man wants cause of tears and a daily sorrow. Let every man consider what he feels, and acknowledge his misery; let him confess his sin, and chastise it; let him bear his cross patiently, and his persecutions nobly, and his repentances willingly and constantly; let him pity the evils of all the world, and bear his share in the calamities of his brother; let him long and sigh for the joys of heaven; let him tremble and fear, because he hath deserved the pains of hell; let him commute his eternal fear with a temporal suffering, preventing God's judgment by passing one of his own; let him groan for the labours of his pilgrimage, and the dangers of his warfare: and by that time he hath summed up all these labours, and duties, and contingencies, all the proper causes, instruments, and acts of sorrow, *he will find that for a secular joy and wantonness of spirit there are not left many void spaces of his life.*' "

As I uttered these striking words, I kept my eyes fixed on Mr. Flint, and perceived that he felt their force; for he gradually shrunk from my gaze, and, ere I had finished, he had turned his face as much to the wall as his constrained position admitted. Having paid him so long a visit, and being so far satisfied that I had left him much profitable matter for meditation, I at once withdrew, with a fervent inward prayer that God would be pleased to awaken in him the conviction that his present life and habits were very different from what they ought to be, and very inconsistent with all to which he pledged himself when he was made "a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven."

As I proceeded homewards, reflecting with joy and thankfulness on the prospect now opened to me, of being (under God) the humble means of bringing my unhappy parishioner to a state of repentance, I was roused from my reverie by the sharp rattle of an approaching chaise; and, on looking up, I saw, to my sorrow and dismay, the repulsive features of Mr. Mandevyl. He recognized me as he passed; and in the profound bow, and almost insulting smile of contempt which accompanied it, I could not help fancying that he had intuitively guessed in what manner I had been engaged, and that he was resolved to counteract me by all the means in his power.

And, alas! the event proved that my anticipations with respect to both points were but too correct. Never again in the course of his illness could I get a sight of Mr. Flint: though I called repeatedly, I was invariably refused admission; and more than once I perceived Mr. Mandevyl watching me from the window of his friend's

apartment, and was greeted with the same provoking bow, and insufferable smile, as he saw me preparing to retrace my steps homewards.

It appeared subsequently, that Mr. Mandevyl, who had recently been staying at Baggesden Hall, and who was still in the neighbourhood, had, on hearing of Mr. Flint's accident, and knowing that he was alone, immediately returned to his friend, for the purpose of being with him and nursing him during his confinement to his couch. The act was praiseworthy; but the evils which resulted from so close a connexion were incalculable. On Mandevyl's arrival, he found Mr. Flint at once excited and depressed by the conversation he had just had with me. Too faithfully warned by conscience that his past life had been spent in forgetfulness of God, and yet too deeply wedded to his self-indulgent habits to have even the desire of throwing them off, Mr. Flint was in the condition of all others which rendered him most open to the sophistries of Mr. Mandevyl. His wish was (or, at any rate, it would be a relief to him) to find that the Bible was not true; he had never attempted to satisfy himself of the truth of revelation by *doing* God's will; and as to having studied its evidences, or prepared himself with arguments wherewith to defend his faith, he had never done any thing of the kind. Accordingly his ears drunk in greedily the various deistical objections to the holy Scriptures: on some points he entered at once into his friend's views; on others, wherein he feebly attempted to argue, his arguments were speedily and plausibly overruled; while even the few wherein for a while the light of nature and the voice of conscience united to preserve

him, as it were in spite of himself, from deeper degrees of guilt,—even in these he soon gave way, unable to endure the force of ridicule, and the wit and banter of his scoffing friend. No doubt it is a painful thing for any person, and especially for a young and diffident one, to be laughed at and derided for the sake of their principles: to some minds it is probably a much greater trial than sharp persecution would be; but it is a trial to which every follower of Him who was “mocked” as well as crucified must sooner or later be exposed, and therefore it is one against the force of which we should early learn to steel our hearts. If the greatest sin of which we can be guilty is to deny our Lord before men, we have need to watch most diligently, lest we should allow ourselves to be sensitive with respect to ridicule. If that becomes our weak point, the devil will gain an easy victory over us; and even that victory will be ten times easier, if we have ever got into habits of irreverence, of speaking, or allowing others to speak, jestingly, if not profanely, with respect to holy things. This had been the error of Tindal Flint. In times past he had thought it no sin to point a jest with a quotation from Scripture, to talk lightly of God’s ordinances, and make a mock at sin; he had therefore by his own act destroyed the shield which might have saved his faith from the attacks of such an assailant as Mr. Mandevyl: the reverential fear of God and God’s word, which is implanted in the mind of childhood, had passed away; he feared not God, but man—not what the Gospel forbade, but what the scoffer ridiculed; and acted as though he thought that what was laughed at was confuted.

Mr. Mandevyl knew full well the sort of character with which he had to deal, and played his part so skilfully, that by the time Mr. Flint had recovered the effects of his accident, he was, in profession, an open infidel.

And *as* an infidel the profligacy of his life increased yearly; the principles he maintained lead, if maintained consistently, to the dissolution of all ties, moral, social, and political; and although the conventional habits of society in a Christian country must in a great measure restrain the deist from working out his own principles, still Mr. Flint was enabled to do mischief enough in the neighbourhood to make every respectable inhabitant of Yateshull bewail the day that gave him a possession among them.

In this deplorable state of things five more years passed away; and Mr. Flint, at the age of five and forty, and having been in possession of Baggesden ten years, was now arrived at that period of life when there was little hope that his habits would be altered, either by his marrying, or by any other of those external changes of circumstances which are apt to modify so materially the previous tenor of a person's character.

At this period it was, and within a few weeks of the time when he was wont to take up his annual residence among us, that, on looking among the deaths in the newspaper, the following paragraph caught my eye:—

“Died, on the 27th ult., at Bellevue Cottage, near Weymouth, in the 32d year of her age, after a few days' illness, Hannah, wife of Tindal Flint, Esq., of Baggesden Hall, in the county of Stafford.”

Never, certainly, was a more startling announcement,

or one that took me more entirely by surprise. My first impression was, that the deceased lady was the mother of my parishioner, and that the age was a misprint; but then I remembered having read the announcement of *her* death at Cheltenham, three or four months previously. I next endeavoured to persuade myself that there must be another Mr. Flint who had lost his wife; but then there was such a staggering detail of localities. In short, the more I reflected, the more I became satisfied of the correctness of the statement: but by way of gaining all the information I could, I determined to call on a neighbour, and see if the same announcement was to be found in the *Morning Post* which I had discovered in the *Times*.

On my way thither I met the four Misses Booberby, who approached me open-mouthed, with the unexpected intelligence which I was about to impart to them.

"Did you ever hear of any thing so extraordinary—at least *out* of a novel?" asked Miss Penelope.

"Did you ever know such an unwarrantable proceeding as his passing himself off as a bachelor?" inquired Miss Angelica.

"To come among us, and make—or at least *try* to make dupes of us!" exclaimed Miss Jemima.

"To pretend to be all freedom and openness, in order to be more treacherous!" ejaculated Miss Rhodolinda.

"He is no better than a swindler!" cried the first.

"And an impostor!" vociferated the second.

"I hope nobody ever will speak to him again!" suggested the third.

"For my part, I am excessively sorry that the woman

is dead, if it is only because we can't affront him by not visiting her!" added the fourth.

"Such a name too! *Hannah!*" groaned all the four at once. "She was evidently no better than she should be!"

Having thus vented their virtuous indignation, the young ladies gave the reins to their curiosity. They knew nothing, they said, but what they had seen in the newspaper. What did I know? what could I tell them?

I could tell them nothing; and no sooner had I confessed my ignorance, than I found their satisfaction at seeing me had most speedily evaporated. It was evident that not one of them would rest in their beds till they had ascertained who the late Mrs. Flint was, and why her husband had never acknowledged his marriage.



A Servant of the Old School.

Orlando. O good old man ! how well in thee appears
The constant service of the antique world,
When service sweat for duty, not for meed !
Thou art not for the fashion of these times,
Where none will sweat but for promotion ;
And having that, do choke their service up
Even with the having.

Adam. Master, go on ; and I will follow thee
To the last gasp, with truth and loyalty.

SHAKESPEARE.





CHAPTER IV.

THERE are certain persons, probably, in almost every parish, who will always endeavour to get out of the clergyman's way if they can, who would rather avoid him than meet him, and whom, as they never come to church, he may perhaps not see from year's end to year's end. This may happen, indeed, less frequently among the poorest members of his flock; because their temporal necessities are a cause of often forcing them, as it were, into communication with their appointed minister. Still, such instances not rarely occur; and grievous and heart-rending they are, and the more so, because there is no immediate or obvious remedy for them. But the most distressing case of all is where a clergyman has such characters to deal with among his more influential and wealthy parishioners. In the first place, they may, if so disposed, so effectually shut their doors upon him, as to cut him off from all opportunity of delivering to them that message which he is equally appointed to carry both to high and low. And, in the next place, even supposing him admitted to their society, it often requires no ordinary discretion to take that middle course between openness and reserve, which shall warn them of their danger, without

affording them the opportunity of increasing their guilt by mocking God, cavilling at His word, or despising His messenger. "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs," said our blessed Lord, "neither cast ye your pearls before swine; lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."* It is obviously a clergyman's duty not to allow either the doctrines he is commissioned to teach, or his sacred office, to lose respect in the eyes of men; and yet how can either be often brought into the company of the bold and open scorner without their being exposed to the licentiousness of his rude, irreverent tongue? But then, on the other hand, what misery is it to think of any member of Christ's Church falling daily from bad to worse, without receiving a daily warning to turn from the error of his ways! A clergyman who, with respect to some unhappy parishioner, has to choose his course between these two conflicting principles, will often be reduced to great straits, and be in much uncertainty how to act for the best. Blessed be God, however, he has *one* resource in such emergencies, which will never fail him,—fervent, unceasing prayer in behalf of the transgressor:

"Love cannot reach him; arrows of despair,
And hope, and fear, fall from him, hedg'd in scale
Of wild obduracy, like iron mail:
But, pastor, hast thou left no weapon there
In thy heav'n-furnished quiver? It is prayer:
Wing'd by faith's pure resolve, prayer shall prevail;
It hath the promise."

The circumstances alluded to above made my inter-

* Matt vii. 6.

course, as vicar of Yateshull, with the inmates of Baggesden Hall a matter of considerable difficulty. While Mr. Flint continued to be what he was, and while his bosom friends were such persons as Sir Luke Warme and Mr. Mandevyl, there was not the least prospect of doing good. My visits, therefore, had for some years past been confined to the mere leaving a card at Mr. Flint's door, at the time of his annual arrival at Baggesden; an event which was always notified to me by the appearance of his old servant's white head in the otherwise empty pew appropriated to the domestics of that ill-regulated household.

A week or two after I had read the announcement of Mrs. Flint's death in the newspapers, I recognized this man in his accustomed place; and inferred from his deep mourning that the report of her death was correct. As I returned from church, on my way homewards, I perceived him standing by a gate through which I must pass. He bowed as I approached, and held the gate half open; as if he had something to say to me, and was hesitating in his mind whether or no he should say it before he let me through.

From his regular habits of attendance at church, I had fallen in with him on previous occasions, and had been a good deal struck both by the benevolence and honesty of his countenance, by the general respectfulness of his manner, and by his conversation and mode of expressing himself. He had evidently received a much better education than is common with persons in his rank of life; and I was inclined to suspect (what I subsequently found was the case) that his present condition was not that in which he had been born. We had only spoken hitherto on indifferent matters; but I already felt

intuitively that he was to be trusted, and Michael Foster showed very evidently that he was anxious to make a friend of me.

I thanked him for holding the gate open ; and, after a few inquiries after his health and so forth, was about to pass on, when an "I beg your pardon, sir," called me back.

I immediately turned round, and seeing some little hesitation in his manner, endeavoured to set him at his ease by inquiring whether I could serve him in any way.

The old man's countenance brightened up at once, and he answered, "Why, sir, I *have* a favour to beg of you. I am growing rather deaf; and the pew where I sit being quite at the further end of the church, I lose a great deal both of the prayers and of the sermon. Could you help me to a seat somewhat nearer the reading-desk?"

"Certainly," said I ; "if you do not mind taking your place among my servants, and in an open sitting, I can put you where you will hear very comfortably."

"Sir, I heartily thank you. I would at any time rather be seated in an open sitting than be boxed up all alone (the more's the pity it should be empty !) in our great pew. We are all equal in God's house ; and therefore I never feel so comfortable in a pew as on an open bench."

"I quite agree with you," said I, "and dislike the system of pews as much as you can do. Self-righteousness was the origin of it; pride continues it; and quarrels and contentions are the daily result of it. But you were regretting the emptiness of the Baggesden ser-

vants' pew. What is the reason why so few of you come to church?"

The old man shook his head, and did not answer immediately. "To be sure they ought to know better, and come at any rate," he said, after a while; and then added, with a sigh,—“but perhaps they want encouragement, and—and the force of example.”

Mr. Flint, I trust, does not *discourage* his servants from going to church?"

"Oh, no, sir; he does not interfere one way or the other."

"Have you yourself no influence among the household?"

"Not much, sir; I am an old man, you know; so they laugh, and say that they shall go to church too when they are as little fit for any thing else as I am; but that at present they have other things to think of."

"You must find it a great trial to have such fellow-servants."

"It is, sir," answered Michael Foster; "for though I do not heed what they say as much as I used to do formerly, there is always the temptation to escape their ridicule. But what can I do? I have lived in the family for more than forty years; was with them in Barbadoes; and before he was five years old, I used to attend my present master to the bright sparkling sands of Silver Bay, and carry the little basket in which he gathered his shells and corals, or sit with him for hours together under the shade of the tall cocoa-nut trees, and the limes, and tamarinds, and mangroves, that surrounded Marli Mount. Ah, sir, I have often thought what a blessed thing it

would have been, if it had pleased God to have taken him in his innocent childhood. To be sure, it would have broken his mother's heart; but better that than that her blind fondness should be his ruin, as it has been, body and soul, sir—body and soul."

"You mean," said I, wishing to draw the old man out,—“you mean that Mr. Flint's errors are the result of his mother's foolish indulgence.”

“Oh, sir, I can trace them all to that,—from the self-willed ways of the child, to the rash, imprudent marriage, which is now the nine-days' wonder hereabouts.”

“Mr. Flint *was* married, then, and the report of his lady's death was true?”

“Yes, sir; and a sad thing it is every way. It was a sad thing his marrying at all; and sadder still is Mrs. Flint's death; for she was a good wife, sir, and a good mother. What is to become of the children, the Lord only knows. Little good, I fear, will they get where they are.”

“Has Mr. Flint a family?”

“Sir, there is a boy fifteen years old, (his health has been so delicate he has not been to school yet,) and two little girls four and five years younger. They are at Baggesden Hall now. I thought you knew it.”

“No,” I replied, “I was not aware of it; but what you tell me fills me with surprise. Do you mean that Mr. Flint has been married fifteen or sixteen years, and nobody knew any thing about it?”

“Yes, sir; Mr. Flint married when he was thirty, just five years before he came to live at Baggesden.”

“What motive had he for concealing his marriage?”

"Sir, my master has pride like the rest of us ; and he probably feared the contempt of some of his relations, and the ridicule of his companions. All these motives would influence him to hide a connexion which certainly was beneath him. But I think what weighed with him most was the conviction that, if he owned it, it would break his mother's heart. She was the proudest woman, as well as the weakest, I ever saw ; but her son adored her as much as she adored him. I suppose that (wilful as he was) he would have yielded to her latterly upon most points ; but his passions were too strong for him ; and so, when he had married a grocer's daughter at Cheltenham, the only thing left for him to do was to conceal it. There was a terrible struggle in his mind, and he was very unhappy ; for he had great affection for his wife, and a desire to do her justice ; but his courage failed him ; and though he more than once resolved to declare his marriage, he put it off from day to day and from week to week, and so kept it a secret at last."

"But how was it possible for him to do that ? Some of his servants, at any rate, must have known of the connexion ; and they were not likely to hold their tongues."

"Yes, sir ; most of them knew that there was a lady who called herself Mrs. Tindal Flint, and that there were two or three children at Weymouth ; but none of them knew of the *marriage* but myself. They looked on the connexion as an unlawful one, and supposed that it was on that account they were forbidden to speak of it on pain of dismissal. The affair was rather talked about at first ; but such kind of things are not uncommon, I sup-

pose, among gay young men, and so it was soon forgotten, or at least ceased to attract attention."

"And his mother never knew it?"

"Not that I know of, sir; and she was a kind of woman, sir, that would have winked at such a thing, under the notion that it would prevent her son's marrying. She was so jealous, she never could bear the thought of a daughter-in-law."

"But this poor lady herself," said I, "Mr. Flint's late wife,—do you mean that she connived at her own infamy? I could not have thought that any woman in a Christian country would have submitted to such a degradation."

"She was the gentlest and most timid, as well as the loveliest creature I ever saw," answered Michael; "so that I question whether she would have had the spirit to assert her rights. But, poor thing, she did not know for many years that she was defrauded of them; she did not know the light in which she was looked upon by the world. She had, I fear, been taught to believe that her husband's, and consequently her children's, property was wholly in his mother's power; and under such a persuasion consented to live in complete and entire seclusion so long as Mrs. Flint senior lived. Her trial was less, probably, than that of others under similar circumstances, because my master loved her tenderly to the last, and she was quite wrapped up in her children. But when she discovered accidentally how her good name had been taken away, and yet, for her children's sake, dared not immediately vindicate herself, her spirits failed her, her health broke, and she pined away; so that when an accidental

illness seized her, she sunk under it at once, and died in a few days. Thank God, however, she died comparatively happy; for the previous decease of her mother-in-law had done away all obstacles; and Mr. Flint openly acknowledged the marriage to his friends at Weymouth, and so made the only reparation in his power. But it was then too late; and her gentle, sorrowing spirits speedily passed away to a world where they 'neither marry, nor are given in marriage.'"

If I was deeply touched at the portrait which the old man had drawn of his unfortunate mistress, I was not less shocked and indignant at the heartless cruelty of Mr. Flint, and at the crimes into which his unprincipled conduct and selfish habits had led him. Here, thought I to myself, is a fair sample of the practical working of the world's laws. The gratification of self is looked upon as the one thing needful, and whatever interferes with that is recklessly set aside. If the ties of natural affection come in collision with it, those ties are cast off; if conscience upbraids, she is set at nought, till she speaks no more; if the restraints of religion interpose themselves, religion herself is renounced. It is evident that Mr. Flint was never taught to discipline his heart and feelings in early life, to consider others rather than himself, or to surrender his inclinations to the will of God. The consequence is, that throughout his whole life he has been acting from impulse, instead of principle. He has only listened to the dictates of his own wayward will; that will has led him step by step in the downward path of guilt, and entangled him more and more continually in the toils of his spiritual enemy.

It was Michael Foster who first broke the silence which ensued, when he had finished his statement. "You are thinking, sir," he said, "of my unhappy master. We have all much to answer for, and I know that in my own case it is no excuse to say, that matters would only have been worse if I had left him. I feel sure—my conscience tells me—that I ought to have left his service long ago. No servant who has any regard for his soul will stay in a household where God is openly set at nought: but I loved my master; and from being about his person and waiting on him, I had more opportunities of speaking to him than others. And perhaps I had more influence with him than many. He would be angry with me for a while, perhaps, and call me an old fool, and so on; but he would always put up with me, and sometimes he may have been ruled by me, though he hardly knew it."

"I wish with all my heart," I exclaimed, "you had always ruled him! you were much more fit to rule him than he was to rule himself."

"I don't know for that, sir," replied Michael, modestly. And with a little hesitation, and a sly, demure look, he added, "But there is one, sir, who, if he thinks well of it, I *do* wish to see ruled by me."

"And who is that?" asked I, anticipating the answer.

"Yourself, sir, if I may be so bold as to say so. Ah, sir, we do not often see you at Baggesden Hall! and I am sure it's not to be wondered at, considering what my master and his friends are and have been. But, sir, he is alone now with his children; and he feels Mrs. Flint's loss so much, that perhaps, please God, his heart may be more open to you than it has been hitherto."

"Well," said I, "you may set your mind at ease on that subject; for if I am alive and well, I will call on Mr. Flint to-morrow morning."

"Perhaps, sir, you could make it convenient to call about one o'clock; for my master is generally at home then, and I will take care and be in the way to let you in. I dare say you don't know it, sir, but there is an agreement among the servants never to admit you, for fear you should come to make complaints. They never rested till they got William Smith turned off, only because he let you in the day that my master discharged Martin Gale; and I'm sure a greater villain than that never set foot in a gentleman's house. However, he has got his reward,—he was transported for life last spring, for house-breaking."

I have heard a good deal, and seen a good deal, of the audacity of servants in ill-regulated households; but I certainly had not anticipated that they were ever to decide who should, and who should not, be admitted into their master's society. And so I told Michael Foster; but the old man only shook his head and smiled. Supposing that he had now said all that he wished to communicate, I stopped to take leave of him; but he still hesitated.

"I hope you will excuse my freedom, sir," said he at last; "but there is another thing I wished to speak of,—these poor dear children. I love them as if they were my own: and they have been always well done by and well brought up; but they will be heathens, sir,—they will be heathens,—unless some care is taken of them."

"Do you mean that Mr. Flint neglects them?"

"Oh, no : old Gideon Bagges never loved his gold so much as he loves those children. But he just lets them have their own way ; and that Miss Chickweed, the governess, with all her talk and new-fangled notions, is no more fit to bring them up in the way they should go, than I am to fill your pulpit, sir : but, however, if you come up to the hall you will see and judge for yourself ; and (excuse me, sir,) don't you mind him, if my master does fly in a passion, and speak a rough word or two. Just stand up to him, and tell him your mind. It never does to be afraid of him. As for the governess, you'll soon find out what she's made of. And now, sir, with many thanks for all your patience and kindness, I will not trespass longer on your valuable time : if any of our people find me here talking to you, they will undo this day's work, and make the house too hot to hold me, I reckon."

So saying, with a smile on his face, but with the tears in his eyes, Michael Foster made his bow, and, turning down the road to Baggesden, was soon out of sight ; but as he disappeared, his upright gait, and firm elastic step, suggested to me the thought that he was one whose heart had been eased of a heavy burden.

And why is it that there are so few Michael Fosters in the world ? How comes it that attachment like his is so rarely to be found ? Why have servants ceased to identify their master's welfare with their own ? Why is it that so few are found who can number, not twenty, thirty, forty years in the same service, but who will be content to stay more than two or three years in one family ? Why are there such never-ending complaints

of the inferiority of servants in the present day ? Why are they looked on as so much more greedy, mercenary, and discontented than those of a former age ?

Alas ! whatever be the faults in servants, (and I fear, in many respects, the complaints brought against them as a class are but too just,) whatever be *their* faults, it is the masters themselves who have been the primary cause of their deterioration. The change of character in our domestics is but one symptom among a thousand of that terrible disease which is fast eating into and destroying all our social relations. In a former age the tie between master and servant was paternal, on the one hand, and filial on the other. The inferior was continually under the superior's eye ; both sat in the same apartment, ate of the same meat, drank of the same cup, lived in each other's society, and shared together, to their mutual edification, in the blessed ordinances of the Church. Thus the mind of the young dependent was moulded and fashioned under the vigilant care of the master or mistress ; habits of regularity and moral discipline were enforced, and if but little knowledge was imparted, there were at least the rudiments of the best education carefully instilled,—obedience and love. The master knew his servant, the servant knew his master ; and there was reciprocal interest and regard.

But we in the present day *are indifferent to these things*. Masters look to their servants' usefulness, servants look to their wages, and there the connexion ceases. We are grown too refined, forsooth, to tolerate a more familiar intercourse. We think it wisdom to be exclusive, and to widen instead of repairing the breach

which has been made in the various links of society. That "epicurism of the heart and mind, that lax, voluptuous, selfish spirit, which is the plague and poison of this country," encourages us to look on our dependents as if they were created for no other purpose than for our use. We choose to forget our responsibilities in our restless search after ease, and indolence, and comforts,—comforts to the possession of which we sacrifice every thing, even our own souls. And so we neglect our duties to our servants, and then wonder that they, with fewer advantages, are not better than their predecessors : we set them the example of self-indulgence, and then are surprised that they are profligate ; exhibit daily our own covetousness, and are amazed that they are mercenary ; are satisfied with nothing short of the best of every thing for ourselves, and marvel that they should ever be discontented.

And what has led us into all these evils ? One single cause,—our neglect of the Church-system ; in other words, the system of the Bible. With us the *personal* is every thing, the *common* almost nothing. We keep the doctrine out of sight, that we are members one of another ; that master and servant alike belong to that fellowship whereof Christ is the Head ; and we will not fulfill his law by bearing one another's burdens.

And till this fatal error is amended, it is vain to hope that any improvement will take place in the general character of our dependents. It will only be when masters practically remember that they "have a Master in heaven, and *that there is no respect of persons with Him,*" that their servants will "do service with good will, *as to the Lord, and not to men.*"

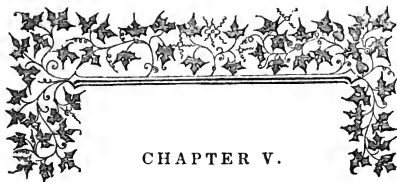
A Teacher of the New School.

“ The shadows fly, philosophy prevails,
Prayer to the winds, and caution to the waves !
Religion makes the free by nature slaves ;
Priests have invented, and the world admired
What knavish priests promulgate as inspired ;
Till reason, now no longer overawed,
Resumes her powers, and spurns the clumsy fraud,
And common sense diffusing real day,
The meteor of the Gospel dies away.”

Such rhapsodies our shrewd discerning youth
Learn from expert inquirers after truth ;
Whose only care, might truth presume to speak,
Is *not* to find what they profess to seek.

COWPER.





CHAPTER V.

TRUE to his engagement, Michael Foster was ready at his post to admit me, when on the following morning I proceeded to Baggesden Hall ; and he led me direct to Mr. Flint's study. I confess I felt somewhat staggered at the boldness of the old man's proceedings, and began to wonder how such an unexpected intrusion might be taken ; but the event showed that Michael had not unduly estimated his influence over his master's mind.

" Mr. Warlingham has called, sir ; and I have brought him this way, as I knew you would be sure to wish to see him." The words were perfectly respectful, but the decision of manner which accompanied them was very like that of a nurse addressing a child,—a sort of tacit recommendation to do that well and at once which must be done sooner or later.

Mr. Flint, who had apparently been gazing listlessly at the fire from his easy chair, looked up, and seeing me in the distance, smiled good humouredly, as if he had detected and was amused at old Michael's artifice, and received me with his usual courteous and gentlemanlike manner. Meanwhile I was much struck with the alteration in his appearance since I had last seen him. He was grown thin and old ; his looks were wan and hag-

gard ; the laughing expression of his eyes had vanished ; and his countenance generally bespoke anxiety and depression. A life of pleasure, as it is called, being a continual gratification of the appetites, is sure to brutalize the features, and make the lines of the face hard and coarse. It was so with Mr. Flint : all that originally seemed pure and noble had passed away ; all that was bad or unpleasant in his physiognomy had become exaggerated. His present resemblance to his former self was like that between a skillful original portrait and a copy by an inferior artist—the one is nature, the other a caricature. But if luxury and self-indulgence had left their deep marks on Mr. Flint's once-handsome countenance, the lines of severe and recent sorrow were to be traced not less clearly ; and I fancied, as I looked at him, that he must have been weeping no long time before I had been admitted to his apartment.

"You and I, Mr. Warlingham," said he, when the usual salutations were over, "you and I, sir, have chosen very different paths ; and our opinions, probably, on most subjects, are wide as the poles asunder : but I reverence any man who honestly discharges his duty ; and I appreciate the motive which has brought you here to-day. You have heard that I am in affliction, and, according to your office, and (let me add) in unison with the natural inclinations of your own kind heart, you are come here to try and alleviate it : is it not so ?"

I answered in the affirmative.

"Frankly, then, I thank you," said Mr. Flint ; "while I am constrained to say that I should derive no consola-

tions from the source to which I know you would refer me."

"What! not from the Gospel?" I asked.

"No," replied the unhappy man.

Here, then, from a deist's lips was the confession that deism deprives its votaries of all that can make bereavements tolerable; and while it places its chief happiness in the enjoyments of this life, contrives to make the world a thousand times more "a vale of tears" than it would otherwise be, by giving back to death its sting, and restoring, so far as it can, the triumph of the grave. Mr. Flint was evidently sorrowing as they who have no hope; and thus, by inevitable consequence, must every man sorrow who,

"Warp'd into the labyrinth of lies
That babblers, called philosophers, devise,
Blasphemes his creed as founded on a plan
Replete with dreams unworthy of a man."

"And where, then, if I may ask," said I, "do you expect to find consolation, if you will not seek it in the word of God?"

"Satisfy me that the Bible *is* the word of God, and I am prepared to bow to it; but till I am so satisfied, I am content to look to *time* as the grand alleviator of all evils. Meanwhile the only plan is to harden one's self, as much as one can, against mortifications and disappointments."

"It is *one* plan, certainly," I replied, "but not the only one. If, instead of trying to *harden* your heart, you would allow a spirit of resignation and submission to

God's will to *soften* it, you would soon turn your misfortunes into blessings."

"Misfortunes may be turned into blessings, Mr. Warlingham? You may as soon convince me that evil is good, or black is white. The only good I ever saw in misfortunes is, that 'they teach one indifference,' as Horace Walpole says."

"Does he say so? The falsehood was worthy of the man. Did misfortunes teach *him* indifference? Set aside the graphic cleverness of his style and epistolary powers, (amusing chiefly because it appeals to all the bad passions of our nature,) and what is the point in his character which is even more striking than his prejudice, or his heartlessness, or his vanity, or his meanness, or his skepticism? Is it not a querulousness about trifles, and an inability to submit to petty disappointments which would have disgraced a spoiled child? *He* learned indifference from misfortune? no, not even to a finger-ache."

"You are hard upon my friend Horace, Mr. Warlingham."

"Not half so hard as he deserves. Such a man's opinions would be beneath notice, if people were not led away by the influence of a name. But, to return to the point from which we have digressed, you spoke of hardening yourself against the effects of bereavement; have you ever succeeded in doing so?"

"Why, I am a person of strong natural affections," (and the tears rose in Mr Flint's eyes as he said this,) "and therefore I have more difficulties to contend with than most people; and my loss, you know, is very recent;

so that at times my sense of loneliness and desolation is so oppressive, that I wish I was in my grave too.

‘ When true hearts lie wither’d,
And fond ones are flown,
Oh ! who would inhabit
This bleak world alone ? ’ ”

“ Ah,” said I, “ the lines you have just quoted are exquisitely poetical in expression, exquisitely musical in their flow ; but the sentiment contained in them is as little in accordance with the aspirations of a resigned, humble-minded Christian as need to be.”

“ Why so ? ”

“ Because there is not the slightest hint expressed or implied of a desired submission to the will of God ; and yet, lamentable as I think their tone of feeling, they are calculated to suggest one very solemn thought. The poet shrinks from the idea of lingering on in this world when those whom he loves have been removed from it by the hand of death. You remember what he says in the lines preceding those which you repeated :

‘ So soon may I follow
When friendships decay,
And from love’s shining circle
The gems drop away : ’

He expresses the wish to ‘ follow ’ them ; but *whither* ? ”

“ Ah, Mr. Warlingham, whither ? That is a question which neither you nor I can answer. The grave, if it has any secrets to reveal, has never, and never can, disclose them : if, indeed, there be an unseen world, all must be vague speculation concerning it.”

I could scarce refrain from shuddering as I heard this dismal confession of unbelief. "If such," said I, "be your real opinion, my wonder is, not that I find you unhappy, but that you continue sane; for, for myself, I can truly assure you, that existence upon such terms would be to me wholly insupportable. I cannot devise a single source of comfort on which your mind can rest."

"My endeavour is *not* to allow my mind to rest on the subject at all."

"But it does so, Mr. Flint, in spite of you—you know it does."

He could not deny it.

"It appears, then, that when you reject revelation, you have nothing to substitute in its place; and even its rejection does not free you from anxiety with respect to the future. What do you *gain* by denying the Bible to be the word of God?"

"Freedom from error," said Mr. Flint doggedly.

"Be it so," I replied. "And you desire, since, according to your view, all beyond the grave is at least uncertain, to crowd into this present life as much happiness as you can?"

Mr. Flint intimated his assent.

"Well, then, granting for argument's sake that the Bible is *not* true, that it is the invention of priestcraft, or what you will, I will undertake to prove to you, that the man who is (as you would say) deceived into the belief of his Bible, is far happier even in this world than one who rejects revelation. The Christian believes that, though sprung from a fallen race, he is the heir of heavenly hopes; that, by the loving mercy of his Almighty

Father, he has been placed in a state in which (unless by his own fault) he cannot miss of everlasting happiness, has been grafted into Christ's Church, and made God's child by adoption and grace ; that every trial, and trouble, and sorrow which comes upon him, is sent for the gracious purpose of purifying his affections from earthly things, and fitting him for the enjoyment of heaven ; that from the hour of his incorporation into the holy Catholic Church, he becomes one of a body to whom death is no evil, and for whom the grave has no fears ; a body in which quick and dead are united, and whose fellowship extends into the unseen world ; a body whose living members can lay their departed brethren in the grave in sure and certain hope—can contemplate their present state as one of rest and peace—and can look forward to a future re-union with them in that world, where sin, and sorrow, and death may never enter. Now, granting, I say, that Christianity is a fable, a falsehood from first to last, instead of being, as it is, entire and perfect truth—granting that death is an eternal sleep, and that the body committed to the dust shall never know a re-awakening—yet surely he is happiest, who, under the influence of a harmless delusion, lives and dies contentedly, parts calmly and resignedly with the dearest objects of his affections, as one by one they are taken from him, bears his trials meekly, his troubles faithfully, his pains thankfully, and sinks into his grave at last with a blissful hope, which if not destined to be realized, will at least remain unconscious of its disappointment ;—surely, I say, he who so believes (though deceived) is ten thousand times happier than one who, in rejecting the Bible, rejects what never

yet was known to fail those who trusted to it, either in the sorrows of life, or in the hour of death. Ah, sir, why not study that Bible, as rather wishing to believe than to disbelieve it?"

Mr. Flint's emotion did not at first allow him to answer; he was pale and agitated, and a slight convulsion passed over his face. At length, with a heavy sigh, and in a low, shuddering tone, he said,

"Mr. Warlingham, I DARE not!"

My unhappy parishioner had hardly spoken, when a light step was heard in the passage, the door flew open, and a very handsome though delicate-looking boy came into the room, exclaiming as he entered, "Oh, papa, do come down stairs and see what curious fish the keepers have caught." Then observing me, he stopped short.

In a moment Mr. Flint concealed or shook off his agitation; and infinitely relieved, no doubt, by the abrupt conclusion of our conversation, said, "Well, my boy, we will come and see the fish; but you must first make your bow to the vicar of Yateshull. Mr. Warlingham," he continued, laying his hand on the boy's head with a look of affection and pride, "this is my son Julian; and a very good lad too, though I say it to his face."

The commendation brought a deep blush of pleasure over Julian's countenance: and he stretched out his hand toward me, as though I had been an old friend.

There is always something winning in a manner which seems to unite modesty with self-possession; but, independent of this, I have seldom seen a better countenance, or a sweeter and more amiable expression than Julian Flint's. His was one of those faces about which

there can be no mistake. A glance showed that he was worthy of a parent's pride and affection.

"I suppose this is holiday time," said I to Mr. Flint. "Is your son at a public school yet?"

"No," replied Mr. Flint; "I think of sending him to Eton soon; but he has been out of health—outgrown his strength, I believe—which has made me unwilling to expose him to risk. Till lately he has been at a private tutor's; but since we came to Baggesden, we have been rather idle. We read history together; and my girl's governess has undertaken to make a good linguist of him, which is what is more needed for gentlemen now-a-days than any thing else. However, I suppose he must go to Eton by and by, just to make acquaintance."

I thought this a strange, unsatisfactory plan; and I afterwards found out that Mr. Flint's own weakness, and unwillingness to lose his boy's society, had been to the full as much the cause of Julian's being kept at home as the delicacy of his health. However, it was not my place to say any thing on the subject, at least on that occasion.

We were now to go and see the fish; but the object of Julian's eager interest was to me the least curious part of the exhibition.

On the lawn, at a short distance from the hall-door, stood a game-keeper, two little girls, about eight and nine years old, and a lady in a bright scarlet gown and a prodigious cap with sky-blue ribands in it. She was tall, large-boned, coarse-featured, and as we approached we could see her gesticulating with her great sprawling hands, and hear the tones of her harsh, masculine voice. I was wondering who so very unpleasant a person could

be, when Mr. Flint said, "Ah, I see the governess and my little girls. I must introduce you to Miss Chickweed; odd—rather ungainly in appearance—doesn't sacrifice to the graces—but very clever—quite first-rate as a governess, I believe. Mandevyl's sister engaged her for me. Poor fellow, he's gone to Madeira, you know; his health is quite shattered. It will be long before we see him again, I fear."

"I am glad," thought I, "that his power of doing further mischief here is abridged, at any rate."

As we approached the group, I saw upon the grass at their feet two fine specimens of the burbolt; a fish not very uncommon in the Trent and Tame, and occurring, I believe, in some of the rivers of the northern and eastern counties, but, comparatively speaking, little known.

"Good morning, sir," quoth Miss Chickweed to Mr. Flint; "I was in the midst of an ichthyological lecture; telling the young ladies the difference between acanthopterygious and malacopterygeous fishes. Malacopterygeous, Mary?"

"Soft-finned," said the little girl doubtfully.

"Quite right; and acanthopterygious, spinous-finned, like a perch. Very important that young persons should know these things," with a bow and a stare at me. "Well, Susan, and what's the fish with a name something like burbolt?"

"Barber, ma'am," answered little Susan.

"Barber! child; nonsense. Barbel. B, a, r, bar; b, e, l, bel—barbel: say it over six times, and then you'll remember it. Well, and what's the difference between barbel and burbolt?"

"One's very good to eat, ma'am, and the other isn't."

"Ay, ay, Susy," said Mr. Flint, laughing, "stick to the practical part of ichthyology."

"Yes, papa," replied the child, with a scared, puzzled look, which only made her father laugh the more.

"Very fine fish the burbolt," continued Miss Chickweed; "firm, white, well-flavoured. We used to have them frequently at Thick Whitton Hall, and Lord D'Olterton's cook used to send them up with '*sauce à l'aurore*;' it makes all the difference. Wonderful artist was Hippolyte!" added Miss Chickweed, with a sigh.

"Was he the gentleman," asked Mr. Flint, "who suggested the plan you mentioned the other day, of throwing live eels into the fire, to get rid of their superfluous fat?"

"Oh," said Miss Chickweed, colouring slightly, "a good cook will always consult his employer's health, as well as the gratification of his palate; and the blue skin and oil of eels is highly indigestible. Burnt eels are certainly the healthier; but people must be left to their choice in the mode of cooking them."* The last sentence was uttered in somewhat of an apologetic strain; for

* If any reader thinks this an exaggerated picture, let him turn to Ude's "French Cook," (page 224,) and he will find the horrible practice here alluded to, together with additional cruelties, both advocated and defended. There is nothing so selfish, or heartless, or degraded, as an epicure. But that the barbarity of fiends, for the mere gratification of appetite, should be tolerated in a so-called Christian country, is really quite appalling.

while Mr. Flint looked black as night, I had turned away in disgust, which I took no pains to conceal or repress.

At that moment a servant approached to announce luncheon and the children's dinner; and at Mr. Flint's request, (and not without an approving smile from Michael Foster, whom I saw in the distance,) I re-entered the house with the family.

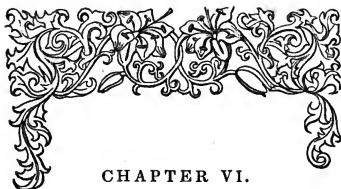


Old Systems and New.

Such was the lot of eld ; for childhood there
The duties which belong to life was taught ;
The good seed early sown and nursed with care
The bounteous harvest in its season brought ;
Thus youth for manhood, manhood for old age
Prepared, and found their weal in every stage.
Enough of knowledge unto all was given
In wisdom's way to guide their steps on earth,
And make the immortal spirit fit for heaven . . .
Further might each who chose it persevere ;
No mind was lost for lack of culture here.

SOUTHEY.





CHAPTER VI.

It certainly was not (as I half-suspected she supposed) my admiration of either Miss Chickweed's talents or conversation, which made me so readily follow the family to the dining-room ; but I was not without curiosity to see a little more of this pattern-instructress ; and I was anxious to make the most of my present opportunity, and, if possible, lay the seeds of a future intimacy, which might enable me eventually to gain the confidence of Mr. Flint, and, without seeming to interfere, might influence him and his children for good.

A few minutes after we had entered the dining-room, (where, observing that the children were about to sit down to their dinners without saying grace, I said it for them, to Miss Chickweed's apparent amazement,) Mr. Flint was called out of the apartment on some matter of business, and the governess feeling, no doubt, that the duty of making the agreeable devolved on her, addressed me as follows :

" Dull, poor-looking village, Yateshull, sir ? "

" I am sorry to find you do not admire it ; but I hope when summer comes you will change your opinion. I have always thought it one of the most cheerful, sunny

spots I ever saw, with its smooth, sparkling river, and cottages peeping from among the trees."

"Oh, I dare say it is very well for a country place; but I abominate mud and rustics."

I did not see what reply was to be made to this expression of opinion, so I held my tongue; but the silence was not destined to last long.

"Nothing going on at Yateshull, I dare say, from year's end to year's end?"

"Madam?" said I, interrogatively; for I really did not know what sort of progress Miss Chickweed expected of us.

"You have no news-room, sir, or mechanics' institute, or public library, or lectures for the lower orders?"

"We have a very good lending-library, ma'am; and there are lectures in the Church on——"

"Tut! *Church*, sir? I don't mean *sermons*; but lectures on mechanics, and the fine arts, and literature, and natural history, and so forth."

"No, ma'am; our agricultural population have, I suspect, neither time nor the requisite knowledge or taste for such things."

"Of course not," said Miss Chickweed: "neither knowledge nor taste come of themselves; but it is the duty of the clergy to implant them."

"I have not the least objection to give any aid in my power to such objects; but it must be when I have secured more important ones."

"Why, what can be more important, for instance, than political economy? What is more valuable, even to rustics, than correct views about capital, and wages,

and rent, and labour, productive and unproductive? Ah, when I see other places, I often think how fortunate were the inhabitants of Thick Whitton! Poor dear Lord D'Olterton was a genuine philanthropist—built such a beautiful mechanics' institute! had such eminent men to lecture there! Dr. Glibbe's famous lecture on gluts was first delivered at Thick Whitton,—dear Lord D'Olterton, and his two sweet girls, Lady Euphrosyne and Lady Atalanta Cubley, and I, all went to hear him. We came back perfectly enchanted; could think of nothing else for days after. Wonderful man! wonderful work! 'Glibbe upon Gluts' should be read and studied by every man, woman, and child, from the Land's End to John o' Groat's."

Miss Chickweed would have said more, but her heart and mouth were both full.

"And, pray allow me to ask, ma'am," said I, "was the Thick Whitton Institute well attended?"

"Oh, I believe so," replied Miss Chickweed; "I know Lord D'Olterton desired the bailiff to see that his labourers went there regularly. He was for giving them all the benefits of instruction."

"Was his lordship equally anxious that they should be instructed in their religious duties?"

"Of course he desired that they should be sober, and honest, and all that; but Lord D'Olterton was not the man to interfere with any person's religious opinions."

"His lordship was himself a Churchman?" I asked.

"Oh yes: he did not go to church in the country, because the clergyman at Thick Whitton had been very impertinent; but he always considered himself a Church-

man, though he was too much of a Christian and philanthropist to prefer one sect more than another."

"Ah, exactly," said I; "so I suppose. You agree with his lordship, then, in thinking that there was more true philanthropy in sending his labourers to mechanics' institutes, than in setting them the example of going to Church?"

"Oh, mercy," exclaimed Miss Chickweed; "the labourers' morals were the clergyman's affairs, not his."

"I am glad to hear you express this opinion, ma'am, as I intend to shelter myself under it. It *is* the clergyman's business to look after the morals of his poorer neighbours; or, in other words, to instruct and guide them in the ways of Christian holiness. And woe be to him who imagines that he can do this in any other way than God has directed! Even where he acts upon the soundest principles, his task (in the present state of society) is one of extreme difficulty. For what, after all, in most agricultural parishes is the history of a labourer's life? He leaves school at 12 or 13 years of age; and from that time till he can work no longer, he has to struggle for his daily maintenance. He rises early, labours hard, lives, alas, harder, and returns to his cottage at night tired and weary. He has but one day of rest—the Lord's day. How little time has such an one for the attainment of even religious knowledge! How impossible, under the most favourable circumstances, that he should gain any thing beyond a mere smattering of these multifarious branches of secular knowledge, the cultivation of which is so much in vogue at present!"

"Still, a smattering, I should think," said Miss Chickweed, "is better than ignorance."

"I very much doubt it," I replied, "where the smattering is sure to puff him up, and make him vain. If he happen to have a turn for any particular branch of science, by all means let him cultivate it: such knowledge is harmless, may be useful, and, at any rate, the taste for it is a thousand times better than the taste for politics and newspaper discussions. I do not reprobate the acquirement of knowledge—I would encourage it; only I would give it its proper place, and restrict it to proper objects. But it is all folly to suppose that you will ever ameliorate the morals or condition of the poor by making them political economists. It is beginning at the wrong end. Science is the handmaid of Religion, not her mistress. Neither physiology, nor chronology, nor zoology, nor any other 'ology' that ever was invented, will make a poor man better, or wiser, or happier. But instruct him in his Bible, and teach him, as the Church does, to make it the rule of his daily life, and you do make him good, and wise, and happy,—a kind neighbour, a faithful servant, a loyal subject; you make him contented and respectable in all the relations of life; you give him that which will keep him humble, and sanctify his attainments, however high; in a word, you give what will carry him through the trials of his lowly rank, and fit him for that presence in which he who humbleth himself shall be exalted."

"Oh, of course—of course," said Miss Chickweed, though her manner belied her words; "you look at the matter as a clergyman, and in a very proper light,—very," she added, in a patronizing tone. "I cannot at-

tempt to controvert your position ; only, as a consistent advocate (which I flatter myself I am) of ‘the-greatest-happiness-principle,’ I must say it appears to me that the modern system is more attractive than the old one. My principle is——”

“Please, Miss Chickweed, may I have some more ?” said Mary Flint, holding her plate in the direction of some apple-puffs.

“More pudding ? yes, certainly,” answered the governess, looking directly away from the puffs, and with malice prepense putting a lump of rice-pudding on the child’s plate. Mary coloured, looked disappointed, but said nothing.

“My principle, Mr. Warlingham,” continued Miss Chickweed, resuming the thread of her discourse, “is, ‘the greatest possible happiness to the——’ What ! done already ? well, Susan, there’s some pudding for you too.” (The little girl thereupon looked as piteously as her sister had done.) “My principle,” said Miss Chickweed, with an air of profound self-respect, as she put the three apple-puffs which remained in the dish on *her own* plate,—“My principle always has been, and ever will be, ‘the greatest possible happiness to the greatest possible number.’”

“Your principle,” said I, “is that on which Christianity is grounded ; it is that (I say it in all reverence) which has guided the All-Holy and All-Wise in all His dealings with His creatures.”

“Oh, of course—of course,” replied Miss Chickweed, in the same careless tone she had used previously ; “but my application of the principle is this ; since, in the pres-

ent state of society, you can't cram religion down the people's throats if it has no attractions for them, the best plan to promote the welfare of the many will be to give them pleasing, useful knowledge, and scientific instruction; and so, by humanizing them and refining them, inspire them gradually with a taste for religion, and the kindred occupations of elegant minds."

Deeply shocked at hearing such a sickening farago of nonsense come from the lips of one who was herself engaged in the task of education, I asked whether she thought it desirable that her system should be universally adopted,—should become the recognized method of instruction for all?

"Oh, certainly," said she, warming with the subject; "it is the system I always follow myself: no religious subtleties for me, I thank you; no creeds, and catechisms, and things which children don't understand ——"

"Pray, ma'am, do you allow your pupils to read the Bible?"

"To be sure. I wonder at your asking such a question."

"Do they understand *that*?" I inquired.

"I always explain it down to their intellects."

"Mysteries and all?" I asked.

"Oh, yes," replied Miss Chickweed, with unblushing confidence; "it is easy to show that the chief things which present difficulties to the mind are mere figures of speech, or forms of eastern hyperbole."

Worse and worse, thought I. These poor children are preparing to receive lessons of infidelity from their father, through the medium of a rationalist governess.

But I had no time either for reflection or expostulation. Miss Chickweed ran on: "No, Mr. Warlingham; I hope we shall live to see the day, when teaching poor children the Catechism will be exploded. Why, it is hard for grown men and women, and therefore it is mere folly to make children learn it."

"Oh!" groaned forth little Susan, and looked at Mary, and then they both looked at Julian, who, pushing back his chair, exclaimed, his cheeks scarlet, and the tears in his eyes, "Well, all I know is, that *she*—dear mamma, I mean—taught us to say our Catechism, and told us it was good for us to learn it, even if we didn't understand it; and so I'm sure it was *not* folly to learn it; and I am very glad we learnt it, and we can say every word of it, though you never hear us say it."

"Master Julian Flint, I will trouble you to speak when you are spoken to, and not otherwise, unless you wish to be put out of the room," exclaimed the preceptress, in no very gentle tone.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Warlingham," she continued: "I was saying, (when that impertinent boy interrupted me,) that I am quite against teaching the Catechism to children. Even if they could understand it, it can do nothing but instil the prejudices of a sect. It will contract, instead of liberalizing, their opinions. No, sir; I look on a young mind as a sheet of white paper, and would always endeavour to keep it unsullied by bigotry, till, 'slave to no sect,'—taking

— 'no private road,

It looks through nature, up to nature's God.'

I would teach the young to look out upon the face of the material universe; and from the wonders of astronomy, and chemistry, and animal life, to acknowledge the hand of a Creator, and so come to the adoption of those tenets of Christianity which are acknowledged universally, and admit of no dispute."

"And which be they, madam?" said I—drily enough, I confess.

"Eh?—oh!—ah!" replied Miss Chickweed,—“why, the great outlines of the faith.”

"There is not one, I believe," said I, "which has *not* been disputed. Ah, madam, your own words show that your scheme is impracticable; and even were it not so, there is one insuperable objection to it; for I do not hesitate to assert, that it is forbidden in the word of God. Your rule is, 'Obey because you believe;' that of the Bible is, 'Believe *and* obey.' Your plan is, that every child should work out its own belief; that of the Gospel is, that every child should 'hear the Church.' Your system of education is to make revelation the last thing learned; the Bible proclaims that it should be the first: '*Train up* a child in the way he should go.' 'Come, ye *children*, and hearken unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord.' 'The fear of the Lord is the *beginning* of wisdom.' Depend upon it, therefore, madam, you will find, upon reflection, that you are advocating a method of education which can only end in disappointment to yourself, and ruin to your pupils. You are running counter to the experience of all ages,—a circumstance which of itself would go far with any humble mind to make it doubt its own decisions: but I will go

further than this, and challenge your own experience to say whether the results of your system have answered to your anticipations."

At the first part of this address Miss Chickweed appeared all impatience to answer me; but from some cause (unknown to me at the time) my last sentence filled her with confusion. The appeal to her own experience was a shot fired at random, but it did more execution than my whole previous battery,—a fact at which I ceased to wonder when I became better acquainted with the lady's history,—though that is a subject on which I do not think it necessary to enter here.

At this moment Mr. Flint re-entered the room. To say truth, I was not sorry to have the discussion interrupted; for the conversation, which had been unexpectedly forced upon me, was not particularly suited to so youthful an audience. It is impossible to be too careful in respect to what is said before children. Their little ears are open to whatever falls from the lips of their elders: good or bad, nothing is lost. And they form their opinions on matters within their scope with wonderful acuteness and precision, for they have few prejudices; and, generally speaking, when their notions are incorrect, the error may be traced to their having misunderstood something said in their presence, or to their judgments having been perverted, through their dutiful, unquestioning reverence for the opinions of some older person—their superior, perhaps, in knowledge, but their inferior in simplicity and wisdom. Therefore, I repeat it, we can never be too circumspect in what we say before children, lest any careless word should teach them evil of

which their pure minds were ignorant,—should raise doubts or questions where doubt should not exist,—should make them think lightly of sin, or well of the ways of the world.

I was therefore grieved that the Flint children should hear Miss Chickweed's exposition of her opinions, although the refutation of them followed immediately ; and it was not difficult to see unfeigned satisfaction in the countenance of Julian and his sisters whenever they perceived that the governess had the worst of the argument. The result, however, I had not anticipated. As soon as Mr. Flint entered the room, Julian addressed him : " Papa, if you please, I should like to go to church on Sunday, as I used to do at Weymouth."

" It is a long walk," answered Mr. Flint, in a tone of indecision ; for he was off his guard, and unprepared with a better excuse.

" Not above a mile, papa ; and even Susy walked twice as far and back this morning."

" Yes, indeed I did papa ; I shan't be at all tired," said Susan.

" Oh, do say yes, dear papa," cried Mary.

There was no help for it ; so Mr. Flint said yes.

" Thank you ; thank you !" exclaimed the three children."

" And now, Mary," said Julian, " you will be able to hear an organ : you always wanted to hear an organ. And Michael Foster says there is an organ at Yateshull Church, and chanting too."

" Chanting ? what is chanting ?" asked little Susan.

" Singing the psalms, Susan, in a way to prevent peo-

ple hearing them or understanding them," replied the incorrigible Chickweed, who, I perceived, had not much desire to go to Yateshull Church, and was eager to say something which might affront me.

"Your definition," said I, "is an odd one from the lips of a Churchwoman, and has more satire than truth in it, if applied to the service when properly performed. However, if it is any satisfaction to you to know it, the psalms are *not* chanted in Yateshull Church—only the hymns which are familiar to every body, and which every body can follow. And I hope, when I have the gratification of seeing you among us, you will rather find pleasure and edification in our practice than the reverse."

"Oh, I hate music," answered Miss Chickweed. "I wouldn't stir a step out of my way to hear the finest quavering and strumming in the universe. I scarce know a drum from a triangle, or the bagpipes from a hurdy-gurdy."

"Certainly then, Miss Chickweed," said Mr. Flint, smiling, "you are no very fair judge of Church-music."

"I don't affect it," replied the lady tartly; "but of this I am sure, that if there is a stupid, useless thing on the face of the earth it is a cathedral! Nothing but prejudice and jobbing has prevented their being swept away! and as for the devotion to be found in them, I will give you a sample of it that I saw no long time since with my own eyes. I went with Lady Atalanta Cubley, one day last spring, to the cathedral at ——. Well, not one of the old drones, that they call canons, appearing, the service commenced, proceeded, and was finished, in the most disgraceful manner imaginable.

Congregation there was none but our two selves and an old woman ; the reader gabbled through the service ; and, while he was reading or praying, some eight or ten choristers, in dirty surplices, were whispering and laughing on the opposite sides of the choir. Now this I saw with my own eyes."

"Then, madam, you saw a most sad and disgraceful sight, and one that, I do not hesitate to say, was perfectly indefensible ; but surely you do not mean to infer from this circumstance, that such is the *usual* manner of performing the cathedral-service in England. It is quite possible that from sickness or some other cause the canon in residence may be absent from his post ; and if he is, it is, alas, quite conceivable that 'such a scene as you have described might take place, in the present state of national apathy with respect to religious ordinances. But do you suppose that if the laity did their duty—if the inhabitants of the city of ———, in which your cathedral is situated, prized their privileges as they should do, such a thing *could* happen ? If a tenth, ay, a hundredth part of those who *might* have attended that daily service had done so, do you think it would have been so performed ? I grant that the desertion of our cathedrals is a grievous sight ; I grant that, through the people's sin, they hardly answer the purpose of their founders ; I grant that in their present condition they are a

'Sad picture of lost faith, and evil nigh.'

But if they answered no other purpose than one,—if they only continued to exist as *witnesses* against the present generation of what has been, and what ought to be, they

have a boundless claim on the people's gratitude, that they should be maintained in all their integrity and decent splendour. So long as one stone of our cathedrals is left upon another, we never can be without a warning of what the Church requires of us, or without an evidence of the temper which she desires her children to exhibit :

' Without, the world's unceasing noises rise—
Turmoil, disquietude, and busy fears.
Within, there are the sounds of other years—
Thoughts full of prayer, and solemn harmonies,
Which imitate on earth the peaceful skies ;
And canonized Regret, which backward bears
Her longing aspect, moving thoughtful tears.' "

Having said this, I hastily took leave of the party at Baggesden Hall, without allowing Miss Chickweed time for further parley. I had not said all I wished in defence of one of our most honoured institutions, but I had said enough for the present purpose ; and had more been necessary, I should have endeavoured, in my own homely phrase, to have embodied some of the thoughts contained in a passage which I met with in after-years,—a passage which may well claim the attention of the reader, not only for the sake of its truth and glowing eloquence, but for that of its author, one of the Church's most faithful sons, most loved, and most lamented.

" Let us reverence the spirit of self-sacrifice of the dark ages, as we contumeliously term them, and see with what a noble ardour the men of those days devoted *all*,—money, time, thought, hope, life itself,—to raising for God and man shrines as worthy of God as human

hands could raise, and fit and able to lift man's thought and hope beyond earth, and lead it heavenward. *They* did not sit down to sum up the exact cost of glorifying God; they did not calculate exactly how many the holy roof could cover; they knew with their hearts, if their tongue never uttered the truth, that

‘High Heaven disdains the lore
Of nicely calculated less or more.’

And, in the spirit of that higher philosophy, they gave all they could, knowing that they gave not in vain. And vain it has not been. No! as year by year the pealing anthem has fallen on the charmed ear, and nave, and choir, and aisle have unfolded their awful perspective to the astonished eye; if a human as well as a heavenly register could have been kept, to tell what transports of love, of devotion, of heartfelt penitence, of rapture, and of tears, the holy walls have witnessed, and sent up in memorial on high,—*the lowest of all the low, the utilitarian himself*, if he believed that there is another world beyond the grave, would be constrained to allow, that the riches lavished on the abbey and the cathedral were spent wisely and well.”*

* The Duty of maintaining the Truth: a sermon, by Hugh James Rose, B. D.





Ebensong.

O, wedding-guest ! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide, wide sea :
So lonely 'twas, that God Himself
Scarce seemed there to be.
O, sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company,—
To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay !

COLERIDGE.





CHAPTER VII.

AN infidel father and a rationalist governess ! what possible chance could there be that children under such tutelage should win their way to light and knowledge, to godly fear and love ? Many a time I proposed this question to myself, and many a time my gloomy forebodings, as I well remember, raised in my mind most melancholy visions of the future. Calm reflection, however, brought with it a more cheerful, or, at any rate, a more hopeful view of the state of things. If there was abundant room for deep anxiety, still there was none for despair. True, the chances, humanly speaking, were very great, that, so far as those about them were concerned, the youthful inmates of Baggesden Hall would be brought up in a careless indifference, if not even in a contempt for religion, which is a thousand times worse than utter ignorance. Nevertheless, my faith told me that He, without whose permission a sparrow may not fall to the ground, was watching tenderly over them ; that He who had brought them into covenant with Himself by holy baptism would afford them the opportunity of leading the remainder of their lives according to that beginning : I

had seen that their deceased mother had instilled into their infant minds the rudiments of true religion; and the bread so cast upon the waters is sure to be found, though, haply, after many days. A seed had been sown, which, even though it should lie dormant for a while, was full of inherent vitality. And, further, there was comfort in the thought, that as yet their pure, innocent spirits had all the simplicity, and docility, and reverence of childhood, not unmingled (as the scene recorded in the last chapter proved) with courage and firmness. Under such circumstances, it was not unreasonable to anticipate that they would rather be deterred from than imitate the principles and patterns which were set before them. Children are so observant, their tender consciences so soon take alarm, they are so easily and instinctively shocked at what is wrong, that it continually happens that their characters, as they are developed, come out in complete contrast to those of the very persons who, it might have been expected, would have influenced them most. It is true, unhappily, that instances are not wanting in which the piety of parents has not only failed to be attractive to their children, but wherein it seems to have disgusted them, and given them an actual distaste for religion; but when this has been the case, it may be confidently asserted that there has been some great error committed in their education, or that there is some feature in the parents' character—harshness, gloom, or the like—which has, through early misconception, become identified in their children's minds with the results of religion, though, in fact, it is the effect of natural temperament, or the evidence of remaining infirmity. On the

other hand, however, the bad example of parents proves, in one way, a safeguard to their children, who, by the scenes which are brought under their eyes, and by their daily experience of the effects and tendency of evil habits, gain a most powerful practical warning, that the ways of righteousness alone, are those of pleasantness and peace,—a warning, perhaps, more effectual and lasting (as being of a personal nature) than any thing else could produce.

Here, therefore, was my main ground of hope with respect to Mr. Flint's children. They loved their father tenderly, and no wonder, for he was devotedly attached to them; but still the light must gradually dawn upon them, that he was very different from what he ought to be: and as there was nothing whatever in Miss Chickweed which was calculated to produce love or respect, it seemed probable that her pupils would not be slack in forming their opinions about her, especially in matters which were at variance with what they had been taught by their mother.

The question which had arisen with respect to going to church was consequently, all things considered, a very fortunate one: there could be no doubt in the children's minds, that to go was a duty, and that to stay away unnecessarily was a sin. This was a simple matter of right or wrong, in which they were not liable to be puzzled; and accordingly, the encouragement or discouragement which their proposal met, could hardly fail of making a strong impression on them.

It was not without considerable curiosity that I turned my eyes to the pew appropriated to Baggesden Hall, when

I entered the reading-desk on Sunday morning. However, it was empty, as usual; and so I took it for granted that some objection had been made, or some obstacle found to prevent Julian and his sisters coming to church. But in the middle of the second lesson, the rattle of carriage-wheels on the gravel caused the congregation to look up; then the church-door was thrown back on its hinges with a good deal of unnecessary noise, a sharp voice of genuine school-room intonation was heard, and, preceded by a footman bearing as many cloaks and shawls as if the party were about to pass the night in the middle of Salisbury Plain, Miss Chickweed entered the church, radiant in ill-assorted colours, and apparently prepared to stare down the whole congregation. Her pupils followed her quietly, but, as it seemed to me, with the uncomfortable feeling which every right-minded person experiences who finds himself coming into church after divine service has commenced.

The second lesson was finished before the process of opening and shutting the pew-door, flapping about the hassocks, and similar noises subsided, and the officiating minister began to be heard once more. The pause, however, was of brief duration; for in a short time the footman was beckoned, and despatched to open a neighbouring window, which, of course, stuck fast, and would not open without the clerk's assistance. In five minutes Miss Chickweed had moved herself and her young ladies five several times, (taking care to drop books and kick the hassocks on each occasion,) in order to be out of the way of the draught; and, failing of doing this to her satisfaction, there was a fresh beckoning and whispering to have

the window shut. And this sort of annoyance was continued till the conclusion of the sermon, when Miss Chickweed, availing herself of the moment when the opening of the pew-door would cause as much inconvenience as possible to the retiring congregation, quitted the seat, and pacing down the aisle, the admired of all beholders, looked up to the pulpit with a nod of recognition; (which, of course, was not returned,) and so passed out of church.

The Sunday following it rained, and the Sunday after that there was an east wind, so we saw nothing of the governess and her pupils for three weeks, when they appeared once more, in the middle of the evening service. The next morning Mr. Flint quitted Baggesden Hall for London, leaving his family, however, behind him. It was not to be expected, when he was gone, and there was no longer any appeal from Miss Chickweed, that the children would be allowed to come to church. It was too cold, or too hot, or Miss Chickweed had had a bad night, or she had heard that there was "a great deal of whooping-cough about, and she had never had the whooping-cough." In short, there was always some insuperable objection against attending divine worship.

Lent was by this time nearly over, and we had entered upon the most solemn week of the Church's year. Perhaps (with the exception of the almost universal neglect of Ascension-day, which, in an age that affects peculiar reverence to the Saviour, is a fact altogether inexplicable, unless upon the supposition that that reverence consists in word rather than in deed,—since there is no reason why the festival of our Lord's ascension should be less honoured than that of his nativity,)—perhaps with

the exception just alluded to, there can be no more signal and painful instance of the carelessness in spiritual matters which marked the last age, than the almost universal closing of our churches—at any rate those in the rural districts—during the holy week. I can understand how those who never fast, and who do *not* think (as our Church does) that it is “much to be wished” that the “godly discipline” of primitive times should be restored again, set no store by Lent, and count it no privilege, or source of thankfulness, that a season has been set apart *for them*, wherein they may retire from the world, and give themselves up to offices of humiliation and prayer. It is intelligible that persons who are disposed to set their own judgments above that of the Church should allow what they look upon as an ordinance solely ecclesiastical to fall into desuetude and oblivion. It is intelligible, though it is hard to say how people can persuade themselves that they can despise the Church, without at the same time, despising the Church’s Head. But where Passion-week is not observed, the neglect can hardly fail to arise not only from indifference to the privileges which the Church offers, but from deadness to religion, and low views of what has been achieved for us by the sacrifice of the Cross. At least it is strange that any can think of the innumerable benefits which Christ by His precious bloodshedding hath obtained for us, and fail to prepare himself duly for the yearly commemoration of that most awful event.

I am thankful to say that my pious predecessors in the parish of Yateshull had never been so far seduced, by the apathy of former years, as to give up the services

which, from time immemorial, had been maintained in their church during Lent and Passiontide. True, the attendance during the former season was far below what it ought to have been, and there were not many of those who had to earn their daily bread that were to be found among the congregation; their labours had called them forth until the evening. There is but one method by which the privileges of daily service can be brought within the reach of the poor; their matins and vespers must be performed at hours which will enable them to go forth to their labours in the strength of prayer, and to revisit the house of God when the toils of the day are over. It is a sad mistake to open our churches at hours when nobody but the idle and wealthy can attend them.

Our prayers during Lent were therefore offered, as I have said, by a small congregation; for (according to old custom, which I had not then changed) they began at eleven in the forenoon; but in Passion-week it has been the usage for many years to celebrate the evening service at an hour when the labourers have returned from work; and the consequence is, that the church is as full as it is upon Sundays, throughout the week, and a more orderly and devout assemblage it would be impossible to find.

I have rarely seen such a beautiful subject for a painter, such striking effects, such depth of light and shade, as are exhibited in our old church on these occasions. The venerable fabric, which appears to have consisted originally of a narrow, ill-lighted nave and chancel only, was increased during the fifteenth century by the addition of a chantry, (called in our old records, "the Chant-

ry of the Cross,") erected by Sir John Campville, lord of Yateshull; which chantry is as large as the original structure. Hence, Yateshull church appears to consist of two aisles, extending from end to end, and divided by a row of heavy columns and arches. This arrangement is very inconvenient, inasmuch as it excludes one-half of the congregation from the sight of the altar, and makes it difficult for the reader to be heard equally well in all parts; but so far as picturesque effect is concerned, there really is nothing to be desired.

On the evening of which I am about to speak, divine service was concluded, the last members of the congregation were quitting the venerable pile, and I was myself about to follow them, when I paused to look round me and admire the solemn beauty of the scene. One of those soft spring days, (so rare in March,) when all nature seemed to revive to life and joyousness from the chill gloom of winter, had been succeeded by a night of equal beauty; and the full moon, as her light entered the southern windows of the chantry, showed by her unbroken lustre, that she was beaming through an almost cloudless sky. We have, alas, but few vestiges of painted glass left in Yateshull Church. The hand of the spoiler did his work so effectually, as only to leave enough to show the cost and beauty of the original design, and to remind us (if we will receive the lesson) of our own covetous spirit, which has failed to restore what once existed;—not, indeed, those parts which might have been superstitious or objectionable, but such as would have accorded with the feelings of catholic antiquity, and harmonized with the services of our own pure Church. Here and

there a fragment of ruby or azure glass interposed itself between the moon and the chequered pavement of the aisle, and a corresponding stain of blue or crimson was seen on the floor; but for the most part, the pale, cold light was poured through quarries of plain glass, and cast its rays undimmed over the objects opposed to it. The church itself was illuminated by a row of lamps, suspended at intervals from the roof along each aisle, which, while they afforded sufficient light for the wants of the congregation, were still too few in number to bring out each part of the building distinctly; and thus an effect of vastness was produced which by no means existed in reality—the dark oak roof seemed of immeasurable height, and such of the arches as had no lamp near them seemed to be the commencement of an endless perspective of cavernous obscurity.

The east end of the church was the only portion of it which could be said to be adequately lighted. There the tall candles on the altar, and an additional number of lamps depending from the hammer-beams of the chancel-roof, threw their lustre on surrounding objects; and the yellow glare mingling with the moonshine streaming in at the windows, and falling on the recumbent figures sculptured on two altar-tombs of alabaster, produced a most striking, I might almost say unearthly, effect.

While I stood contemplating this scene, and feeling its harmony with the solemn season, and the affecting service which was just concluded, I heard a light step behind me, and turning round, found Julian Flint at my side, and saw in the distance the old man Michael Foster, who was evidently in attendance on his young master.

My first exclamation was one of surprise: I certainly never anticipated seeing any of the family from Baggesden in Yateshull Hall Church at such an hour.

"Well, I hope I have not done wrong, Mr. Warlingham," said the boy, blushing; "I thought there would be no harm if I came with Michael."

"Harm!" I replied; "no, I do not think you can take any harm from being out in such a beautiful evening as this; and I am sure you would not do any thing without Mr. Flint's leave."

"Oh, papa is gone to London, you know, and Miss Chickweed says she don't care what I do, or where I go, so as I don't bother her; and papa always likes me to be with Michael. So, as he was coming to church, I came with him."

"You could not have employed your time better," said I.

"I am so glad I came, Mr. Warlingham. Do you know, I never saw a church at night before;—how beautiful, how awful it is!"

"It is always awful," I replied. "A place which is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven cannot fail of being 'dreadful,' whether we are in it by night or day,—if, at least, we have any of the patriarch's spirit within us. 'Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not,' is a text which ought to come home to our hearts, and give us much reproof and much instruction."

"So it ought, Mr. Warlingham; and I hope I shall think of it more than I have done. I do not mean that I ever felt that a church was like any other building: but

by daylight there is more to distract one's attention, and make one think of the world without, than now."

"As a matter of feeling, no doubt it is so; but we should strive to keep before our minds continually Who it is that hath promised to be present where two or three are gathered together in His name."

"But there are so many things that make us think more of man than of God in most churches."

"I don't quite understand you, Julian."

"Why, I will tell you what I was thinking of this evening, though I am almost ashamed to do so. I remember that the walls of the little church which we used to attend in Dorsetshire were ornamented with texts of Scripture; there was one opposite our pew, I recollect, that often recalled my thoughts when they were wandering,—'The Lord is in his holy temple:' but here the walls are all covered with monuments, and that sets one wondering all about the people whose virtues are commemorated; at least I do. Look at that thing," continued Julian, pointing to a heavy mass of lapidary mourning affixed to the opposite wall, which consisted of a marble tablet supported by two fat little boys, whose pocket-handkerchiefs at their eyes were their only clothing, and which was surmounted by vases with gilt flames at the angles, and a phoenix at the top,—“Look at that thing; the moon shines on it so clearly that one can read every word; I have read it till I can say it by heart:—

‘To the pious memory of Jane Lady Jellywig, of Lumber Court, in the county of Worcester; a lady whose brilliant wit and lively conversation, whose sincerity without singularity, prudence without parsimony, affabili-

ty without familiarity, and whose many other ennobling sentiments, rendered her the ornament of her sex and the pride of human nature ; and who, after leaving ten pounds a year to the poor of this parish, went to that reward to which her benevolent and ingenuous disposition so fully entitled her. She died on the 1st of April, 1741, aged 67.'

"It really seems quite strange, don't you think so, Mr. Warlingham, that such an inscription as that should be set up in a church ? Does it not appear impossible that those who wrote it should have remembered how unfit it was for this holy place ? And yet are not most monuments equally objectionable ?"

There was something very remarkable in such a speech as this coming from a mere boy. It showed a degree of observation and reflection by no means common with those of his age, and a reverential spirit which could not have been expected in one who had had so few opportunities of seeing it appreciated.

"Yes," I replied, "there is nothing at all uncommon in such inscriptions ; but I quite agree with you in thinking that they never ought to have found admission within our churches. They are one proof among many of the low and deteriorated state of religious feeling among us during the last century. Of old it was not so ; of old the memorials of the dead were not couched in words of boastfulness and presumption, but of humility and trustful hope. Look here," said I, approaching one of the altar tombs ; "this brief legend contains no laboured eulogy ; yet all that needs to be said *is* said in a few simple Latin words,—'Lord, have mercy upon me, a most miserable sinner.' Yet he who is buried below could not have

been one who had put God from his thoughts, for he was the founder of this chantry. Observe this monument too; it is that of his son Sir Ralph Campville: the good knight and his wife lie side by side, with their hands raised above their breasts in the attitude of prayer; and the inscription of names and dates which runs round the edge of the slab concludes with an aspiration which is far removed from the tone of confident boasting,—‘God have mercy on their souls;’ and reminds us of the touching language of St. Paul in behalf of Onesiphorus, ‘The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.’* Even the half-obliterated ‘*Orate pro anima*,’ ‘Pray for the soul of Sibyl Walkadine,’ which you

* 2 Tim. i. 18. It seems difficult to suppose that Onesiphorus was alive when the apostle used these words: at least there is no obvious reason why St. Paul should use such kind expressions towards his “household,” and omit all salutations to the master of the house—his especial friend—if that master was among the living. Compare 2 Tim. i. 16, 18 and iv. 19. The writer of this cannot but think that the apostle’s words have very much the meaning of that passage in the prayer at communion, which was mutilated by Bucer’s influence at the revision of the Liturgy in 1552.

“We commend unto Thy mercy, O Lord, all other Thy servants which are departed hence from us with the sign of faith, and do now rest in the sleep of peace. Grant unto them, we beseech Thee, Thy mercy and everlasting peace; and that at the day of the general resurrection, we, and all they that be of the mystical body of Thy Son, may altogether be set on His right hand, and hear that most joyful voice, ‘Come unto me, O ye that be blessed of my Father, and pos-

may read on this other tomb, superstitious and objectionable as it is—(and as connected with the doctrine of purgatory, it is most superstitious and most objectionable)—still carries humility with it, and has none of that presumptuous wording so common now-a-days, and for which even the deep affection and regrets of surviving friends afford no adequate excuse.”

“Thank you, Mr. Warlingham, for putting all this before me so clearly,” said Julian; “I believe I have felt this often, but I never knew how to put it into words. There is more of a spirit of reverence for God’s house in the fashion of the old tombs than the new. Nobody could ever be moved by those foolish figures,” (pointing to the weeping boys on Lady Jellywig’s monument;) “but there is something quite awful in these recumbent effigies; they look so calm, and pale, and passionless, not quite alive, nor quite sleeping, nor quite dead, but as if their limbs had stiffened in long years of prayer and watching,—as if their blood had ceased to circulate, their hearts to beat, and motion and feeling both were gone, but still that life, like that of the chrysalis, existed yet

ness the kingdom which is prepared for you from the beginning of the world.’”

The rejection of such a passage as this, so pious and so consolatory, (expedient as perhaps it may have seemed at the time, lest it should appear to give any warrant to the Romish doctrine of purgatory,) was, with the omission of one or two others in the same service, among the chief misfortunes attending the Reformation. The American Church has restored one of them: may the example not be lost!

within them,—a hidden life, yet contemplative, vigilant, expectant."

Once more I listened with surprise to Julian Flint's remarks. There was something very uncommon in a boy of his age having reflected on such subjects at all; it showed at once that he had habits and powers of observation which could belong to no mean capacity; and the fervour of his manner, and the brightness of his kindling eye as he described the effect produced on his mind by contemplation of the old monuments, led me to hope that his feelings and sympathies were already enlisted on the side of religion.

"Yes," I replied; "I have often looked on these tombs in the same spirit with yourself; and as I have gazed on the sculptured effigies, have identified them with their originals, and learned to think of them as so intently waiting for the coming of their Lord, as that nothing passing in the world without could interrupt their 'sleep in Jesus.' These were natural thoughts enough for *me*, but how comes it that *your* mind has dwelt on them?"

"Oh, Mr. Warlingham," answered the poor boy, while his eyes filled with tears, "I have many blessings to be thankful for in this world, but I never can love any thing again as I did my mother—and she is no longer among us; and—and so my thoughts, which are never far from her, often turn to those who are her companions—who are where she is—who were as good as she was—and as humble, and——"

He could say no more—the tears choked his utterance; but in a while he recovered himself, and added,

"I cannot tell you, sir, what her loss has been to us ; we feel it more and more every day, instead of less ; and I am sure, if it was not for Mary's and Susan's sakes, I should pray every day to be with her."

"I trust, my dear boy," I replied, "that you will never make such a prayer as that: rather pray God to enable you to take cheerfully what He sees fit to lay upon you; pray that you may submit your will in all things to His, and that you may be thankful for your daily cross."

"I will, Mr. Warlingham, indeed I will; but you do not know, you *cannot* know, the difficulties and troubles of mind in which I often am; and I have no one to speak to, or advise me."

"Surely you have one to whom it is your duty always to apply; you have one parent left. I am sure your father loves you tenderly."

"Dear papa!" cried Julian with earnestness, "I am sure I tenderly love him—he is all kindness and affection to us; but—but there is my main difficulty; there are many things about which I cannot speak to him; perhaps he would not understand me—perhaps he could not quite enter into my feelings——"

The poor lad stopped in evident embarrassment; and, to say truth, I felt my own position to be one of so much delicacy, that I hesitated for a moment what to answer. I was but too well able to comprehend the nature of those sorrows and trials to which he was exposed; but it is a fearful responsibility which they incur who voluntarily interpose themselves between parent and child.

"Well, Julian," I said, after a little consideration,

"your father is, I know, away from home at present ; if therefore, in his absence, there is any thing in which you feel you need an adviser, and in which it is proper that you should consult me, I am sure I shall have great pleasure in giving you all the assistance in my power."

Julian's eyes gleamed with pleasure as he exclaimed, "Oh, thank you, Mr. Warlingham, a thousand times ! May I really speak to you and ask your opinion ? You cannot think what a load you have taken off my mind already. When may I come to you ?"

"I shall be at home to-morrow afternoon," I replied ; and thereupon we shook hands, and parted.





A friend in need.

We have two things to do.—to live and die :

To win another and a longer life

Out of this earthy change and weary strife ;

To catch the hours that one by one go by,

And write the cross upon them as they fly . . .

'Tis hard to live by youth's fast bubbling springs,

And treat our loves, joys, hopes, as flowery things,

That for a while may climb the bough and twine

Among the prickly leaves of discipline :

Yet wouldst thou rise in Christ's self-mastering school,

Thy very heart itself must beat by rule.

FABER'S Poems.





CHAPTER VIII.

Noon was hardly past the next day, when I descried from my study-window Julian Flint, who, punctual to his engagement, was pursuing his way towards the vicarage. I immediately walked into the adjoining meadow to meet him, and give him that sort of welcome which, I hoped, might set him at ease with me, and relieve him from any unnecessary embarrassment in commencing a conversation which could not be otherwise than painful to a modest, sensitive nature.

As I approached him, I saw that he had his fishing-rod in his hand ; and he soon gave me a convincing proof that it had not been a useless companion to him in his stroll by the river-side ; for as soon as the usual greetings had passed between us, he unslung his basket from his shoulder, and produced half a score of fine perch ! “ I have brought you these fish, Mr. Warlingham,” said he, “ if you will accept them. Never was such a beautiful day for fishing ; they took the bait as fast as I could throw in my line : if I had stayed an hour longer, I dare say I should have caught a hundred.”

I made my thanks for the kind present, and added : “ I did not know before that you were so fond of this

amusement. Well, you have the warrant and authority of some of the greatest names in our history for the attractions of angling. You are one of a noble fraternity, and practise an art which has had a more than ordinary share of the wise and good among its admirers. Do you remember how Sir Henry Wotton spoke of angling? 'It was an employment,' he said, 'for his idle time, which was not then idly spent: it was a rest to his mind, a cheerer of his spirits, a diverter of his sadness, a calmer of unquiet thoughts, a moderator of passions, a procurer of contentedness;' and, further, 'it begat habits of peace and patience in those that possessed and practised it.'"

"Why, Mr. Warlingham, are you a fisherman?"

"No, indeed, Julian, not I. My profession makes me, you know, 'a fisher of men;' but this metaphorical connexion is the only one I have with the art."

"How then does it happen that you take such an interest in it, as I am sure you do?"

"Oh, I love angling for the sake of old Izaak Walton, its eloquent and devoted advocate. You know his book?"

"No; I am ashamed to say that I do not."

"Well, then, it will give me sincere pleasure to make you acquainted with it. I cannot promise you, indeed, that by following his directions you will become an adept in the art; for I have heard *mere* fishermen,—folks whose hearts are in their floats, and nowhere else,—speak coldly of the good old man's piscatory knowledge; and sooth to say, I have my own misgivings that not one of his infallible recipes for cooking chub, and making them palatable, will insure them from the high crime and mis-

demeanour of 'eating waterish:' but this I will promise you, that he will teach you lessons for which you will not fail to be thankful; he will lead you through ways of pleasantness to paths of peace. Come and let me introduce you to him."

So saying, I led the way to the vicarage, and in a few moments we were seated in the study. "Why, Mr. Warlingham," cried Julian, after a glance at the bookshelves, "what quantities of old folios! It would take a life-time to get through half a yard of them."

I laughed at the notion of reading books by the yard, and replied, that although I had worked my way through many of them, many more were only books of reference.

"But do you mean that so many volumes are necessary for a clergyman?"

"Mine is so small a library," said I, "and my means of buying books are so limited, that I am forced to confine myself to those which are indispensably necessary."

"Do you think it necessary that a clergyman should have so many books as these? Why I remember Mr. Vane telling poor mamma, that all his learning was contained between the covers of his Bible; he said he desired no more, and would not be satisfied with less."

"Of course Mr. Vane meant that theology was the only science which he habitually cultivated; that 'reading and learning the Scriptures' were his main occupation; that he applied himself wholly to that one thing, and drew all his cares and studies that way. He was quite right. He could not do less without breaking his ordination-vows, which pledge every priest to be diligent in reading

the Scriptures, and in such studies as tend to the knowledge of the same."

"Ah, but Mr. Vane meant that the Scriptures were sufficient for him without those studies."

"Indeed! I trust, Julian, that you misunderstood him."

"Oh, no, I am sure I did not; for mamma talked of it after he was gone, and wondered how he came to speak so slightly of the great divines. He said God has no need of human learning."

"God has still less need of human ignorance, then,—as was long ago said to the Puritans, when they held similar language. Pray, is Mr. Vane a young man?"

"Yes; I believe he came as curate to our parish as soon as he was ordained."

"So I should have guessed. He will know better by and by: and when he really comes to study his Bible diligently, he will find so many things hard to be understood, that he will be very glad to seek that external aid which he once despised; and he will discover that it is all a fallacy to suppose, that any man can make out his religion for himself, with no other help than the Bible. If he will not listen to what the Church would teach him, he will be sure to adopt (though perhaps unconsciously) the doctrines of some other instructor. We are too much fettered by habits and prejudices to be able to act in any matter independently of external influences. And so you see, Julian, I make friends of these folios which you look at with so much awe; and if I gain nothing else, I hope I learn from the perusal of them to be diffident about

myself; and I have the continual pleasure of becoming more intimately acquainted with the powerful minds of saints and fathers of the Church, who, though it has not been given me to see them in the flesh, will hardly be as strangers to me, if, by God's great mercy, I should hereafter have any portion with them, and behold them face to face. I try, while making myself acquainted with their minds, to identify myself with them in my tempers and affections. Would that I had done so more effectually!"

"But how do you find time to read so much?"

"You are assuming, Julian, that I *do* read 'so much.' The fact is, that I study far less than I ought to do; though I trust that I am always doing something that way, and the constant habit is of itself a matter of great importance. An hour a day, for instance, would be a very meagre allowance of time for a man to devote to his books; yet, by the year's end much advance might be made in knowledge, even with such limited means of acquiring it."

"But can you find time for *regular* reading, Mr. Warlingham? I should have imagined that you would be liable to such continual interruptions."

"So I should, Julian, if I did not contrive to get the start of my neighbours by early rising. It is a very good plan to get up with the sun. I do not mean that I quite do this all the year round; but the earlier I rise, and the sooner I inhale the fresh breezy air of morning, the better do I feel in health, the clearer in intellect, the fitter for study; and as for interruptions, I often get three or four hours of study before my more fashionable neigh-

bours have taken off their night-caps. Did you ever calculate how many more days one man gets in the year who rises an hour earlier than another?"

"No, indeed," said Julian laughing.

"Why, 365 hours is something like thirty days of twelve hours each; so that if you get up at six, while I lie in bed till seven, you will contrive, between January and December, to have a month more at your disposal than I have."

"Why, what an odd way you have, Mr. Warlingham, of putting things! Now, I should never have thought of that; but it is very true, and I hope I shall often think of it hereafter."

"Are you fond of reading, Julian?"

"Oh, yes, nothing I like so much; at least when I am in the house."

"And what do you read chiefly?" I asked, in reply.

"Any thing I like. Papa says I may read any books except—except methodistical books"

"There can be no reason *for* your reading such books, and many *against* it. But what made Mr. Flint give you that caution? Have you been in the habit of perusing the writers of that sect?"

"Oh, no: only papa one day found me reading Jeremy Taylor's 'Holy Living and Dying.' It was a book poor mamma was very fond of."

"Your papa must have mistaken the work, I should imagine. The 'Holy Living' was written a hundred years almost before methodism was heard of, and its author was one of the most eminent divines of the Church."

"I reminded papa he was a bishop—"

"Well?" said I.

"He said it didn't make much difference—there was no good moping over those kind of books; so he gave me 'Humphrey Clinker' instead; and certainly I found that very amusing and odd. Aunt Tabitha, Winifred Jenkins, and Lieutenant Lismahago—but I am sure *you* don't much care about 'Humphrey Clinker,' Mr. Warlingham?"

"Not much, Julian. I have not read it since I was your age; and then, I believe, I was as much amused with it as you have been—at least, I was amused with parts of it; though even at that time I was dissatisfied with it."

"Oh," answered the boy, "I should be sorry if you thought I liked to read that style of book; for though parts of it entertained me, I was quite disgusted with a great deal. Shakspeare, or 'Percy's Reliques,' I could go on reading for ever; but I never should wish to open 'Humphrey Clinker' again."

"You are quite right," said I: "Smollett's feeling and taste are altogether depraved; he is very bad in principle, very coarse in style, and his books are filled with oaths, and many other things which are highly offensive. I do not mean that his writings are worse than many novels of the present day; on the contrary, Smollett's books carry their own antidote with them, while these latter are so much the more mischievous, because their deeper laxity and immorality are speciously veiled, and their infamous doctrines are so administered as not to startle the unwary, and disgust at once."

"Do you think it wrong to read novels, Mr. Warlingham?"

"No, Julian, I will not go so far as to say that; because there are many novels with a great deal of good in them, and which have been written for the purpose of doing good to those who will not seek instruction in any graver form; but the *habit* of novel-reading,—the reading novels, that is, more than, or as much as, any other kind of literature,—is very hurtful and objectionable. Relaxation we must all have; and a good story-book now and then is a very harmless method of relaxation; but, in the main, works which require attention, and so exercise the powers of the mind, may become by degrees quite as interesting as works of mere amusement. It is all habit; and if the mind is habituated to trash, it will like nothing else; whereas if it is braced by more serious studies, in those studies it will take delight."

"I am sure," replied Julian, "I have felt this in my own case. How I did hate 'Euclid' when I first began it at my private tutor's in Dorsetshire! but before I left him, I liked it better than any of my other lessons. So, too, now I read with papa, I find the same thing."

"What are you reading with Mr. Flint?"

"Gibbon's 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.'"

"And you think it a very interesting book?"

"Oh, yes: parts of it are dry; but then, in other parts, he seems to bring the people and scenes quite before one."

"And what do you think of all he says about Chris-

tians and Christianity, and the character of the early Church?"

"He tells me a great deal I did not know before; indeed, I have sometimes felt quite sorry that I do know it. I had always fancied the early Christians so pure, and exemplary, and self-denying; whereas the truth seems to be, that our Christianity now-a-days is a much better thing than it used to be in old times."

"Gibbon would certainly lead us to despise *ancient* Christianity; but I do not suspect that you often find him advocating its more modern characteristics."

"No," replied Julian, after a moment's reflection, "I think not."

"Did it ever occur to you, that Gibbon might have written his book with the very wicked purpose of doing all the mischief he could to the Christian cause?"

"No; for I saw no reason to doubt his statements. What good would it do him, or any body else, to injure the cause of religion?"

"What good, indeed!" I answered, with a sigh. "But there was one reason which might have led you to suspect Gibbon's statement. Do you remember what St. Paul says? 'Let God be true, and every man a liar.' When you see a man writing in the spirit that Gibbon does; inducing you—that is, if possible—to think ill of the dispensations of Providence, and that all things are not ordered for the best,—you may always safely set down that writer (*though you may be wholly unable to contradict him*) as a child of the devil, and as one who is striving to do his father's work: and you should receive every word he says with suspicion."

"But was ancient Christianity what Gibbon represents it?"

"I will answer your question by another. Does the king's coin bear his image and superscription most legibly when it has been just issued from his mint, or when it has been transmitted through many hands, and carelessly battered about for many years?"

"There cannot be much doubt about that, I think. The lines and letters on the new coinage are as sharp and distinct as can be, while the old shillings and sixpences were worn so smooth that all traces of the legend were obliterated."

"Yet, nevertheless, the worn pieces passed current; and they were just as acceptable to people in general as if they had been coined the day before?"

"Certainly: so long as they would pass, nobody thought about looking to see whether the king's head was visible or not: people were quite contented, and took it for granted that all was right."

"But when we had once seen the new money, we could find out by a glance that it was, if not purer metal, at least better weight than the old?"

"Oh, yes," replied Julian.

"Well, this will be a fair illustration in the matter we are discussing. When Christianity came forth fresh from the hands of the Lord and His apostles, it bore along with it the evidence that it was no issue of baser metal, which was to be gradually called in hereafter, and re-issued in a purer form as times grew better. No: it was delivered into men's hands as silver purified seven times in the fire, standard money of the merchant, bright and

clean, with its effigy perfect, and its inscriptions clear and distinct. How absurd, then, to imagine that it is more precious now than then, and that its characteristic marks are more easily distinguishable when its lustre has been dimmed by long neglect, and its surface defaced by rough usage ! Surely, instead of being proud, and boastful, and arrogant, we ought (while deeply thankful that the intrinsic value of the metal has not been deteriorated) to humble ourselves in the dust ; mourn for our own carelessness and that of our fathers ; and take heed that no additional dirt or defilement adhere to it while passing through our hands."

"I see what you would bring me to, Mr. Warlingham," observed Julian, in reply : "the matter so put is as obvious as possible ; I only wonder that it did not occur to me while I was reading Gibbon."

"Of course you are aware that that unhappy man was an infidel ?"

"No, I was not," answered Julian, with a look of distress. "Papa said he was a free inquirer, a man of liberal principles, and opposed to bigotry and prejudice ; but he never said he was an infidel. What made him that, I wonder ?"

"If one were to form an opinion from the print of him prefixed to some editions of his works, one should say insatiable vanity, which seems to stamp its expression on every feature of his puffed-up face. But be this as it may, in the knowledge that he was an unbeliever, and that it was the object of his life to deride or wound our holy faith, you have a clue to all that will pain you in his writings, and, I trust, a complete preservative against

the danger of being misled by them. Of course it is impossible that you, at your age, should be able to detect his sophistries, convict him of misrepresentation, find out where he has told but half a truth, (often the greatest falsehood of all,) or to condemn him out of his own mouth. Happily, however, for us all, this has been done unanswerably by several able writers.* And when you next read with Mr. Flint, I would advise you by all means to ask him to allow you to peruse Bishop Watson's 'Apology for Christianity,' which is a reply to Gibbon's chief attacks on it. Perhaps he will find time to read it with you, and be reminded of what can be said on the other side of the question."

"Ah, Mr. Warlingham," exclaimed Julian, "there is the source of all the misery I feel. I fear that papa does not wish to think at all on the other side of the question. I am sure he doubts the truth of the Bible; and it seems as if he did not desire it to be true. This is what I came here to-day to say to you, but what I have been all this time without the courage to say. Oh, do advise me, and tell me how to act; for indeed I have no one to guide me; and what will become of poor papa and all of us, unless some change takes place, I am afraid to think. And yet I can think of nothing else night or day: but I can bear it no longer without speaking to somebody."

I was deeply affected with the poor boy's distress. He shed no tears, in spite of his deep grief; but the struggle between delicacy of thus speaking of his father and

* Bishop Watson's Apology; Kett's Bampton Lectures; Chelsum's Remarks; J. Milner's Treatise.

his desire to unburden his own mind, made him gasp for utterance, and his whole frame trembled with agitation.

"I am but too well aware," I answered, "of the nature of your distress, and am very sure that you do not over-rate the extent of it. You are in the most difficult position, perhaps, in which a child can be placed. You are aware of the extent of your parent's error, and yet you are not of an age to be able to combat it, without seeming arrogant and presumptuous; and it must often be a matter of extreme difficulty to decide where, in obedience to God rather than man, you ought to venture to act for yourself. I trust, my dear boy, that your father does not desire to prevent you from adhering to the faith in which you were baptized?"

"No, Mr. Warlingham, I cannot say he does that; and yet," he added, after a moment's reflection, "I can hardly say he does not. I do not think he ever intentionally lets any thing fall against religion in our presence; and he often says that a man's faith is not in his own power; and he would have every body choose their own creed for themselves; but then he seems disposed to call us off, if he sees us reading good books; and he does not seem glad when we go to church; and I do not think the books I read with him are written by friends of religion. I often wish that papa would make up his mind to send me to Eton at once."

"Why does he not?" asked I, interrupting him.

"He says the public schools are all on such a monkish system, and that there is nothing like a liberal education to be got at Eton and Oxford. But what I was remarking was this—if I was but sent to school, I should

be put into good ways at once, and get out of my present difficulties."

"You would, Julian; but then, on the other hand, you would have other trials not less severe. It is better not to wish to be otherwise than we are: our duty is to try and do God's will in the very situation in which He places us, instead of allowing ourselves to fancy that we could serve Him better in some other position. You have great advantages and blessings where you are, though a sore trial accompanies them."

"I am sure I feel that, Mr. Warlingham; and there is another reason besides, which ought to make me contented where I am: what would become of Mary and Susan if I were away? That Miss Chickweed teaches them nothing but their lessons: indeed, it is well she does not. I only hope papa will find her out soon."

"Well, Julian, it seems by your own showing that you may be of great use at home. You may be of essential service to your sisters; you may make great progress in self-discipline; you may even benefit your father very greatly."

"Indeed? Oh! tell me how, Mr. Warlingham."

"Most effectually of all by praying for him,—by praying for him continually, and watching carefully, as you pray, that you 'honour' him as well as 'love' him, and that you reflect on your own manifold infirmities. The other ways in which you can benefit him will arise, not from your being able to talk about religion, but from your being religious. If he sees you very humble, very dutiful, very affectionate, watching over all your words and actions, thinking of yourself last instead of first, and

making Christian principle, instead of natural inclination, the rule of your daily life ;—if he find you all this, and withal that you are never so happy as when you are meeting his wishes, and yet that you are quite open and honest with him, and, above all, consistent,—you will assuredly have such influence with him, that he will not only leave you to do what your conscience tells you is right, but I believe you will insensibly lead him to think better of religion than perhaps he does at present.”

“I am sure, Mr. Warlingham, this is the best advice that could be given ; but, then, the difficulty is to apply it in all the little matters of daily life.”

“I am quite aware of it, Julian ; but I can do no better for you ; and indeed, I cannot think that an adviser continually at your elbow would be of any great service to you. You *must* learn to act for yourself sooner or later : therein is the main trial of life. If, however, you pay continual attention to the points I have just mentioned, you will find that they will supply you with rules of action under almost all circumstances. Do not hesitate to act for yourself where your duty is clear ; only remember that your safety is in humility and suspicion of your own motives. Where your duty is not clear, you cannot do better than gladly and cheerfully submit yourself to the guidance of one who by his years, his relationship, and his tender love for you, has the natural claim on your obedience.”

“I am deeply grateful to you, my dear, kind friend,” said Julian ; and his glistening eyes showed the intensity of his feeling—“I am deeply grateful to you, and will show that I am, by trying to act up to what you advise,

and by praying God to help me to do so. But I hope you will let me come and consult you whenever I find myself in difficulties."

"Come and consult me by all means, my dear boy, whenever you are in a *real* difficulty; but do not magnify imaginary difficulties into real ones. I am always here,—always glad to see you; but the less, in your circumstances, you consult me or any body else, the better. Any interference between parent and child is a positive evil; and many causes contribute to make it not to be desired in your case. In any *real* difficulty, Julian, come to me without scruple; but in the main act for yourself. And now I must go to see a sick man; and you will find your way back to the river. But stay—you must carry off Izaak Walton in your pocket. And now, to use his own words, Fare you well, my dear fisherman; and 'the blessing of the Master of St. Peter the fisherman be upon you, and upon all that are lovers of virtue, and dare trust His providence, and be quiet, and go a-angling!'"



Both Sides of the Question.

For all thy rankling doubts so sere,
Love thou thy Saviour still ;
Him for thy Lord and God adore,
And ever do His will.
Though vexing thoughts may seem to last,
Let not thy soul be quite o'ercast ;—
Soon will He show thee all His wounds, and say,
Long have I known thy name—know thou my face alway.

The Christian Year





CHAPTER IX.

IT has not been my misfortune to fall in with many professed unbelievers. In the quiet country village in which my lot has been thrown, an open infidel would, I think, be looked on with superstitious horror, as if he were—what in truth he is—a monster. The lower orders in our rural districts may be very ignorant, and in some parts exceedingly demoralized—so much so as to be little, if any thing, short of practical unbelievers; but open infidelity, as a system, has, I trust, made little or no progress among them. I have not met with more than three or four persons proclaiming their disbelief in the Bible during the many years I have been vicar at Yateshull, and all of these were new-comers into the parish:—a retired hairdresser from Birmingham; a profligate young farmer; the sister of an Unitarian preacher; and lastly, Mr. Flint. Of these, the first and second were devoted to drink and all manner of licentiousness; the lady, Miss Ramsons, a hard-headed, heard-hearted political economist, while continually murmuring at Providence for having made her a woman, really seemed to have adopted infidelity because, as she said, (though she little knew

either herself or it,) it had "no feminine weakness about it." Of Mr. Flint it is more difficult to speak; but perhaps it was weakness rather than any thing else which made him what he was, but certainly he was not what is called a man of blameless life. Of course it does not do to generalize from three or four instances: but from all the inquiries I have been able to make on the subject, I am very much disposed to question an assertion I have often heard made, that a man who is exemplary in all the relations of life may nevertheless be an unbeliever. I suspect, in the first place, that there is no such thing as an unbeliever; I suspect that no Christian man ever yet so far cast off his belief, as to cease to tremble in his inmost soul at the possible termination of his career. I suspect that the strong-hold of unbelief is in its professions, that it is all lip-boldness, and that were the skeptic forbidden to speak of his infidelity, it would soon cease to have any charm for him; and though he might not become a better man, he would cease to impugn revelation, and find some other method of deadening his conscience. In short (involuntary ignorance being excluded), it appears to me that there are but two ingredients, in various proportions, in the composition of the professed infidel,—love of notoriety, and a determination not to give up habits of sin. In Mr. Flint's case the latter of these ingredients largely preponderated. He was not, like his friend Mandevyl, always seeking for opportunities of showing off his opinions, and, to do him justice, seemed to have very little vanity on the subject. This gave me one great advantage. I had not the almost hopeless task of combating with the obstinacy of wound-

ed vanity ; and whenever the opportunity was afforded me of pressing home-truths upon my unhappy parishioner's consideration, I was not afraid of speaking plainly under the apprehension that his pride would take alarm.

And such an opportunity I had within a few days after Julian's visit to the vicarage ; for on hearing that Mr. Flint was returned to Baggesden Hall, I called there, and was admitted. A few commonplace topics being disposed of, I inquired after Julian, and mentioned the pleasure I had felt in seeing him.

" Ah, he told me he had been to see you, and had had a famous day's fishing into the bargain: capital hand he'll be with a fly some of these days—light hand, keen eye, and plenty of patience. I can't think where he got the last from—I'm sure I have none of it. You can't imagine how delighted he was with 'Walton's Angler:' I could hardly get a word from him till he had finished it. By the by, he said there was another book you recommended him to read, but he has forgotten the name of it—something which would be valuable for a student in Roman history."

"Not necessarily that," I replied ; "for the book I mentioned has reference only to a particular work. It is an answer by Bishop Watson to Gibbon's mischievous statements with respect to the cause of the spread of Christianity. It is in many respects a valuable publication still, and, as I have always understood, produced a very beneficial effect on its first appearance."

"Indeed," said Mr. Flint with indifference. "And what may be the title of the book?"

"Bishop Watson's 'Apology for Christianity.'"

"An *apology* for Christianity!" cried Mr. Flint, in a tone of exultation. "I did not know it was come to that; the advocates of a cause must feel rather weak when they take to making apologies."

"I have always thought the title an objectionable one on that very ground," I replied. "Persons who like yourself have forgotten, or like others have never heard, that the word *apology* in its original language simply means a *defence*, and as such was the term continually given by the early Christian writers to their treatises in vindication of the Gospel from the assaults of their heathen adversaries, will be apt to receive the term in its present and popular acceptance, as an excuse for something which has given just offence. But if you will read the work in question, you will find that it takes no such low ground as you imagine from its title. It is a satisfactory refutation of Gibbon, and of other writers of the same class."*

"Oh, if it is a work on the evidences, as they are called, I must beg to be excused from reading it"

"May I ask why?"

* The writer earnestly hopes that what is here said in the way of approval of Watson's *Apologies*, as works on the evidences of Christianity, will not be construed into a favourable expression of opinion with respect to that prelate's Church-principles, nor into an unqualified admission of the maxims with which he commences his letters to Gibbon, namely, that "the right of private judgment is superior to the control of human authority;" and that "the Church of England permits every individual *et sentire quæ velit, et quæ sentiat dicere.*"

"Simply because I abominate that style of writing : it bores me to extinction."

"You have read works of this description, then?"

"Yes, your Paleys, and so forth, till I am sick of them. For my part, I can't imagine why you gentlemen in black coats should be so very urgent upon those who are disposed to differ from you, that they should study the evidences. I confess it seems to me a dangerous kind of tampering with your cause ; at least my doubts never are so strong as when I read what are called 'proofs' of revelation ; and I always find scores of doubts suggested to me, which, but for the works which profess to remove them would never have occurred to my mind."

"In plain words, then, you mean to assert that Christianity will not stand inquiry, and that to investigate the grounds on which it rests, is to prove it a fabrication? Well, considering the sort of scrutiny to which the Gospel has been exposed for eighteen centuries, this is a somewhat startling assertion."

"I was not meaning to enter on the general question, Mr. Warlingham, but simply stating the effects of the 'evidences' on my own mind ; they don't convince me where I doubt, and they infuse doubts which did not previously exist."

"You are not on the bench, I think," said I, in reply ; "but no doubt you have attended many trials?"

Mr. Flint intimated his assent.

"Did you ever find the cross-examinations concluded without perceiving that doubts had been instilled into your mind, (whether in favour of or against the accused is

immaterial,) which had not suggested themselves to you in the first instance?"

"Why, perhaps not."

"And perhaps there was hardly a circumstance in the case on which an ingenious counsel might not raise a question as to its truth or falsehood?"

"I suppose not," said Mr. Flint.

"And yet when you came to view the *whole* case in *all* its bearings, you generally contrived (in spite of some apparent contradictions, or matters not quite satisfactorily explained,) to have a decided opinion on it. You did not leave the court with as little bias as you entered it?"

"Probably not."

"Well then, Mr. Flint, you should bear in mind, that not the evidences in favour of revelation only, but all evidence whatever, on all subjects, is calculated to infect the mind with doubts; nay, the closer we may investigate a subject, the more doubts may present themselves to us,—and yet, after all, our doubts can be no proof that a matter is not as it has been represented to us: the error may be in ourselves; we may have resolved not to believe, and be determined not to admit evidence in one case which we should readily receive in another. Our position with respect to religion is not different from that in which we stand in respect to all other matters. The concerns of daily life, and every thing we do, involve a weighing of probabilities. We rely upon testimony; we take things upon trust every hour, not because there is certainty, and no possibility of error, but because there

are sufficient grounds for our faith. Now we are not called on to yield our faith more unhesitatingly to revelation than to every thing else with respect to which we have to form a judgment, except in so far as there is a greater and more complete mass of satisfactory evidence to be adduced in favour of revelation than can be adduced for any other fact."

"I am surprised to hear you make such an assertion, Mr. Warlingham. You don't mean to assert that there is as much need for faith in the common intercourse between man and man, as there is for receiving the mysteries of the Christian religion?"

"I am not speaking now of the mysteries of religion, but of the Christian religion itself. If the religion come from God, the mysteries must be received as a matter of course. That there are mysteries in religion, is no presumption against the truth of religion—rather the reverse; because there must be many things mysterious in a revelation of things divine to mere human intelligence; and therefore no difficulties in religion, independent of difficulties with respect to its *evidences*, are to be admitted *as* difficulties,—they must be submitted to in faith. The previous question being admitted, that the Gospel comes from God, that the writings of the New Testament are genuine and authentic, we are spared all further doubt or questioning on the matters contained therein; which really are too high for us. If we have God's authority for them, they *must* be true, and we have only to receive them unhesitatingly. The matter, therefore, for our decision lies in a very small compass: we have only to make up our minds whether the volume

of the New Testament is what it professes to be ; we are to judge of this by the rules which would guide us in investigating any other question of fact (the credibility of the witnesses, their competency, and so forth) ; and I maintain that the same amount of faith which is absolutely necessary in the common intercourse between man and man, and in the daily business of life, is all that is required for the reception of the Gospel."

" Ah, but there are no mysteries, Mr. Warlingham, in the daily business of life."

" I have already shown that the mysteries of Christianity have nothing to do with its truth or falsehood. But as for your assertion, that there are no mysteries in the daily business of life, surely you must have made it without reflection. Why do you sow your fields with corn ? Is there no mystery in the growth and progress of the future crop ? Can you tell how, and why, ' that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die ? ' Or again, the very food you have taken to-day, why is it necessary for the support of your body ? why does hunger come when you need food ? how does food support you ? Are there no mysteries here ?"

Mr. Flint admitted that he had spoken hastily and without thought ; but added, that he conceived that there was more faith needed in order to believe the Gospel than is required in our common intercourse with each other.

" I think you hold in your hand an evidence to the contrary," said I.

" What can you mean ?" asked Mr. Flint, smiling ;
" This is a letter to my agent in Barbadoes."

"Why don't you give him your instructions in person?"

"Because this letter will do just as well."

"How do you know that?" said I. "How do you know it will ever reach him? How do you know that your servants will convey it to the post, or the post convey it to the packet, or the packet will bear it to the West Indies? How do you know that you have an agent there? Nay, how do you know that the island itself exists? It may have been swallowed up by an earthquake, or be submerged by the sea, since you saw it. And the agent's name may have been forged by another person; or the estate may be sold; or your letter may never reach its destination; the government may only pretend to send letters abroad; or your servant may burn it to save himself the trouble of going to the post-office; or,—but there is no end to the accidents which *might* occur to make your writing that letter useless."

"Perhaps so; but not one of your far-fetched contingencies is probable."

"Exactly so, Mr. Flint; you have weighed probabilities, and finding them very much in favour of your letters reaching their destination, you write them, and forward them without hesitation; all which is an exercise of faith. Indeed, were you to analyse the unconscious processes of your mind, you would find that to send a letter involves divers complex acts of faith; quite as many, if not more, than will be required for the admission of a divine revelation."

"You would recommend the study of the evidences

then, Mr. Warlingham?—for to this point, I suppose, the conversation is tending.”

“Holy Scripture,” I answered, “exhorts us to ‘be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us with meekness and reverence,’ and that were itself a sufficient warrant for such a study ; but, then, we must remember that the Bible seems to exhort us to study the evidences practically, rather than theoretically, since it assures us that ‘if any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.’”

“Is not this requiring us to yield up our reason without questioning?”

“It is only recommending you to do that in spiritual things which you continually do in temporal matters. ‘If you will try the plan, I am sure you will be convinced of its efficacy,’ is the kind of phrase which we use daily to those who are disposed to feel an interest in any thing which we advocate, but who are hitherto undecided as to their personal adoption of it. And why may not religion have the same sort of trial given it, that is given without scruple to a thousand indifferent things?”

“I had not considered the matter in that point of view,” replied Mr. Flint; “there certainly is truth in what you say. But with respect to what are commonly called the external evidences of Christianity, you do not seem so well disposed to recommend the study of them?”

“Pardon me ; our lot has been thrown in an age in which infidelity has been the fashion. We have seen those wretched tiger-monkeys, the French democrats, proclaim the reign of atheism ; therefore there seems

that in the character of the times which makes it needful, *specially* needful, that people generally should know somewhat of the many irrefragable arguments by which the Christian faith is to be supported. As in other ages of the Church it was necessary that the faithful should be provided with arguments against the insidious attacks of the Gnostics or Arians, so now must they be taught to ward off the assaults of infidels. The teaching of each age must be directed to the quarter from which danger is most to be apprehended. If, therefore, by and by, infidelity is driven from the field (as undoubtedly it will, though probably only to give place to some other form of error, through which Satan will attempt to seduce the unstable), the study of the evidences will not be so needful as they are at present; at least as a branch of education. Those who, like yourself, as I fear, have doubts, will, if they be wise and honest, betake themselves to that study, in order that they may have their doubts resolved; but in other cases, I confess, I see little good in laying great stress upon the cultivation of this branch of theological science. The testimony of the Church is quite sufficient *prima facie* evidence for any humble mind that Christianity is true; and, starting from this point, a man has only to do God's will, and obey revelation, in order to be fully satisfied that it comes from God. On this view of the subject, I confess I see little advantage in setting such a work as Paley's as a text-book for youthful minds, in feeding those minds with doubt—suggesting difficulties, as you said just now, which otherwise would not have occurred—teaching them to be looking out for points on which to be suspicious and

skeptical; and all this at a time when manifold temptations are arising to dissuade them from those habits of trustfulness in which their safety has hitherto consisted."

"Well, for my part, Mr. Warlingham, I must say, that I do not see any great advantage in this trustfulness. It seems to me the very thing most calculated to narrow a child's mind, and instil all manner of prejudices."

"I think, Mr. Flint, you have a prejudice against prejudices. Why should not a child have good prejudices instilled into it? Why should its early prepossessions be in favour of universal doubt? Why should it be brought up to mistrust the opinions of those who are older and wiser than itself? You do not leave it to form its conclusions from experience in temporal matters, why should you do so in its religious concerns? If it is to take you on trust that fire will burn it and water drown it, what absurdity is there in desiring that it should do so in a far more important matter? And supposing religion to be true, what can be more mischievous than to teach a young mind to assume that it is false till the contrary is proved; what more dangerous than to strip the subject of the awe and reverence which belongs to it, and discuss that which was proved once for all 1800 years ago, as if its reasonableness and consistency, and so forth, were to be tried over again, not merely by each generation, but by each individual of that generation?"

"But you are begging the question, Mr. Warlingham. You maintain, as a minister of the Gospel, that Christianity is a revelation from heaven. I, on the contrary, declare that I can find no evidence so unimpeachable as to warrant such a belief; there appears to me greater

probability that mankind should have been deceived into a belief of a divine revelation, than that such a revelation should have taken place. And this point I am prepared to argue with you."

"I am quite ready to meet you," I replied ; "though I cannot say that I have hitherto found these sorts of discussions very profitable. My experience teaches me that people will not be *argued into belief*, where the will to believe is wanting ; and perhaps, Mr. Flint, your conscience has ere this suggested to you, that those only are *argued out of their belief* who have the inward desire to cast off those shackles which belief imposes on them."





The Matter brought to a Test.

Dim as the borrow'd beams of moon and stars
To lonely, weary, wandering travellers,
Is Reason to the soul : and as on high
Those rolling fires discover but the sky,
Not light us here, so Reason's glimmering ray
Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,
But guide us upward to a better day.
And as those nightly tapers disappear
When day's bright lord ascends our hemisphere ;
So pale grows Reason at Religion's sight,
So dies and so dissolves in supernatural light.

Dryden.





CHAPTER X.

I HAD already seen, on a former occasion, that Mr. Flint was by no means a confirmed infidel,—one who was so far “undismayed by his own daring,” as (in Wordsworth’s language) to have “doffed the last of his humanity, and be able to go on still in his wickedness without trembling and misgivings. Religion, if I may be allowed such an expression, had never had fair play in his case. He had never been trained up in the way he should go ; had never been taught to master self, and discipline his appetites ; had been left uncontrolled at the most dangerous period of his life ; and by listening to scoffers, and his own corrupt will, had become in profession a deist. But in spite of all these disadvantages, the few grains of good seed which had been early sown seemed rather smothered than eradicated ; and though neglected and overgrown, there was still *life*,—the principle of vitality was not wholly extinct. In short, when Mr. Flint spoke as a deist, he had rather the manner of one who (for consistency’s sake) was acting a part, than displaying his real character ; and occasionally something occurred, which showed that a good deal of what he did and said was assumed. Of course I do not mention this as in any way extenuating

his guilt ; on the contrary, his guilt was aggravated in proportion to his insincerity : but my knowledge of the real state of his mind gave me a power of appealing to the better feelings of his nature on fitting occasions, with the strong hope that my words would not altogether fall to the ground, although their effect might not immediately appear.

It was with this object that I made the remark with which the last chapter was concluded ; and it so far answered my purpose, as to make my auditor thoroughly uncomfortable. Mr. Flint remained silent ; but it was evident, from the expression of his features, that he winced considerably ; his hands, too, betrayed his inward agitation, being employed in cutting open a book with a great deal of unnecessary speed and vehemence. I resolved to remain silent likewise, in order to give my unhappy parishioner time to reflect on what had been said, and thereby to receive a deeper impression. I suppose, however, that in a short time the silence grew intolerable to one of the party ; for after fidgiting about uneasily in his chair, Mr. Flint rose and began to pace up and down the room.

At last, coming to a full stop opposite to where I was sitting, and speaking in the tone of a man who had just discovered some valid objection to his opponent's arguments, Mr. Flint said : " You tell me that Christianity has been proved once for all,—namely, at its institution, but what proof have I that the whole system was not a fabrication of much more recent date than 1800 years ago ? "

" Oh," I replied quietly, " you have just the same proof that you have of any other historical fact,—the rise

of Mahommedanism, for instance ; but perhaps you are not satisfied that such a person as Mahomet ever existed ?”

“ Yes, indeed, I am ; I know no reason to question that.”

“ Well, then, you may receive the evidence of Mahomet, (*valeat quantum valet*,) that in his time there was such a religion as the Christian.”

“ But Mahomet is allowed to be an impostor.”

“ Granted : but the very nature of his imposture implies that that system (whether true or false) which we call Christianity existed previously to his appearance ; because, up to a certain point, Mahomet recognizes Christianity as a revelation of the Divine will. This gives us the historical fact, which is all we want. And by a similar process,—that is, from the evidence of enemies,—we are able, without the slightest difficulty, to trace the existence of the Christian religion up to the time in which, as we assert, it took its rise. If you will apply to Christianity the same rules by which you investigate any other historical fact, you will find that we can allege all the proofs (and with far more precision than can be arrived at in other cases) you can desire ; and with this addition, that Christianity has its prospective, as well as retrospective, evidence in the fulfilment of its prophecies.”

“ Well,” replied Mr. Flint, “ admitting this to be the case, and that Christianity really made its appearance 1800 years since, there would be still the important points to be settled,—namely, that the propagators of this faith

were neither deceivers nor deceived ; and that their writings have not been tampered with nor corrupted."

"Excuse me," I rejoined, "those are points which have been settled long ago. The Church, as 'the witness and keeper of holy writ,' is the undying testimony of its uncorrupted preservation ; and the observance of the holy sacraments is a standing record to us, that the founders of Christianity were neither deceivers nor deceived."

"The Church, Mr. Warlingham !" cried my companion. "Why, you can hardly expect me to defer to her authority, till you can show me that the opinion of her children has been unanimous ; and I suppose even you will allow, that the Church, from its very institution, has presented nothing but the appearance of a vast variety of sects, each denying what the other asserts, and ready to cut each other's throats and tear each other's eyes out, because there are more ways than one of splitting hairs."

"Indeed, sir," I replied, "I will allow nothing of the kind. In the first place, the catholic Church of Christ has been, is, and ever will be, 'one and the same through all advancing time ;' one in heart and one in faith ; and her testimony is, that since the canon of Scripture was complete, it has been received in all ages, every where, and by all. Granting, however, that, as you say, there have been great, and grievous, and continual schisms among those who have borne the Christian name, and that those schisms have, in many cases, arisen from what (comparatively speaking) are trifles, those very variances and dissensions in minor matters have at least this value

in them, that they serve to strengthen the plea drawn from their unanimity in greater ones. The more Christians have differed in non-essentials, the less likely were they to have disagreed in such an essential as preserving the purity of the sacred text. Those who could make a schism about a ceremony would not, it is to be presumed, stand by unmoved and silent when any attempt was made to mutilate and interpolate the Scriptures. Accordingly we have the concurrent testimony of Christendom to their uncorrupted preservation from the first ages to the present hour."

"Indeed ! why, I have understood that there are—I forget how many thousand different readings, owing to the variations of the manuscripts."

"You are quite right," I answered ; it is said that Dr. Mill found not fewer than 30,000 various readings in the manuscripts collated by him ; and it has been asserted, and I dare say truly, that in Griesbach's edition of the New Testament there are 150,000. But what then ? They in no way affect the general credit and integrity of the text. It was, of course, morally impossible, when the multiplication of the Scriptures depended on the labours of copyists, that slips of the pen should be avoided. Here a word would be omitted, there it would be repeated twice over ; a stop would be left out, or inserted in a wrong place, or a wrong stop used ; or there would be a misspelling ; or the writer, trusting to his memory rather than to the copy before him, would transpose the order of the words. Now the art of printing saves us from these sorts of accidents : if the types are set correctly in the first instance, the millionth copy will be as correct as the

first which was thrown off. Yet you must be aware, that such variations as I have described as existing in the manuscripts,—namely, palpable errors of the transcriber, grammatical and verbal differences—such as the insertion or omission of an article, the substitution of a word for its equivalent, or the transposition of a word or two in a sentence,—cannot really affect the integrity of the sacred text. The more the manuscripts collated, the greater, no doubt, would be the variety of the various readings; but then, on the other hand, so much the greater is the facility of ascertaining the genuine text. The most corrupt and inaccurate editions of the old writers are those of which we have the fewest manuscripts extant.”

“But,” inquired Mr. Flint, “are there no various readings of a different description, involving alterations in things of consequence?”

“Certainly, there is a small number of such; but in these cases the true reading may be discovered by other manuscripts, or by a comparison with undisputed portions of holy writ. So that, on the whole, it has been, no doubt, truly asserted, that ‘all the *omissions* of the ancient manuscripts put together would not countenance the omission of one essential doctrine of the Gospel, relating either to faith or morals; and all the *additions*, countenanced by the whole mass of manuscripts already collated, do not introduce a single point essential either to faith or manners beyond what may be found in the received editions.’ ”*

* Hartwell Horne’s “Introduction to the Scriptures,” vol. i. p. 121.

"If this is really so, Mr. Warlingham,—and I am sure you would not willingly misrepresent matters,—it certainly makes a strong case in favour of the unmutilated condition of the text of Scripture. But this is not the only point ; for although the Church may have discharged her duty honestly as the keeper and witness of holy writ, the books of which it is composed may neither be genuine" (written, that is, by the persons and at the time professed), "nor authentic" (relating matters of fact, that is, as they really happened).

"It was as a testimony to these points that I cited the holy sacraments ; and I say that their observance among us demonstrates the truth of the Gospel-history."

"How so ?" asked Mr. Flint.

"I will explain to you. Why do we see people wearing oak-leaves on the 29th of May ?"

"In commemoration of King Charles the Second's hiding-place in the oak at Boscobel, and his escape after the battle of Worcester."

"Exactly so. And if no such event had taken place, and no such man really existed, it is quite incredible that such a memorial could have come into general use ; people would not have conspired together to perpetuate such falsehoods, nor have been able to impose those falsehoods on posterity."

"Why, I suppose not ; at any rate the custom could not have prevailed in later times, unless the contemporaries of Charles the Second believed the tale ; but perhaps the story might have been fabricated by the king and one or two of his courtiers in the first instance."

"I am ready, for argument's sake," I replied, "to ad-

mit your objection ; the principle you would maintain is this, that it is necessary for the establishment of any fact that it should be done *openly*, in the face of the world. I entirely grant this point, and allow that our Boscobel anecdote (though the presumption of its truth is favourable on other grounds) wants this evidence from the nature of the case. It was an act done in secret, of which nobody but the king and Colonel Careless could be cognizant. But now take another case of a memorial. Could the Monument on Fish-Street Hill,

‘ London’s column pointing to the skies,’

have ever been received as a memento of the fire of London, if no such fire had taken place ?

“ No, certainly not ; because, being erected (if I remember right) within four or five years after the date of the alleged conflagration, and the burning of the metropolis being a matter both of public notoriety, and one with respect to which every body’s senses made them competent judges, there could be no room for deception. If the event did not take place, every individual resident would be able to assert that fact ; and if the pillar rose at all, it must carry its condemnation on its front, that it,

‘ Like a tall bully, lifts its head and lies.’ ”

“ Suppose, however, Mr. Flint, that the Monument had only been erected last year, it would not, under such circumstances, have more value as an evidence than as showing that we at this day believed (whether truly or falsely) that such an event had taken place ? ”

“ Precisely so,” replied Mr. Flint. “ I think, with a

little reflection, I could bring forward instances wherein posterity have reared monuments in commemoration of supposed events on very insufficient grounds. I heard the other day of a structure being erected over a spring in Bosworth Field, on the strength of a common rumour that Richard the Third slaked his thirst there in the midst of the battle. It is a pity that the very sonorous Latinity of the inscription should be expended in asserting what after all may be a falsehood: the circumstance itself has no evidence to back it; and it seems improbable enough that in the heat of the battle any body would mark where

‘ The wretched, bloody, and usurping boor,
That spoil’d their summer fields and fruitful vines,’*

cooled his parched tongue: so commonplace an action would never attract notice.”

“It might, or it might not,” I answered; “but it is at least *possible* that in this instance a monument may have been raised to commemorate an event which never took place. The tale is very likely true; but common rumour is hardly a safe guide at the end of three hundred years. In order that a monument may be received as evidence of a fact, it must be set up by those who were witnesses of it.”

“But monuments decay, Mr. Warlingham, and inscriptions perish; and then the reason of their erection (as in the case of Stonehenge) is lost,” observed Mr. Flint.

* Richard III. act v. sc. 2.

"It is very often the case," I replied ; "and therefore some outward actions or observances commemorative of any given event, and commenced at the time it took place, seem to be the most effectual means of keeping up the remembrance of it."

"Do you assert, then, that no event can be proved to demonstration which has no such evidence in its favour ? Why, Mr. Warlingham, I shall begin to think you more skeptical than I am myself."

"By no means," said I, "many things may be true, and be capable of satisfactory demonstration that they are so, without having all these criteria in their favour ; but what I maintain is, that *no matters of fact in which they all meet can be false* ; and that they cannot all meet in any imposture whatever. For instance, if we test the alleged fact of the murder of King Charles the First by the Puritans by these criteria, we shall find it to be an indisputable fact. His execution, which took place *publicly* in front of Whitehall, was a matter of the reality of which the *outward senses* of all present *could competently judge* ; while the appointment, within a short time of his death (and while multitudes were living who had witnessed it), of a service to be performed in the churches upon its anniversary, together with the institution of a fast upon the same occasion, seem to combine the two other criteria which are requisite for a full proof. Had he been executed in private ; had the manner of his death been such that men's eyes could not certainly judge whether life was extinct ; had no public observances been instituted in commemoration of it ; and had those observances not commenced till a century after his death,—

various objections might possibly have been started as to the question of fact (just as it has been doubted whether Edward the Fifth and the Duke of York were really murdered in the Tower by Tyrrell): or, again, had some of these tests been altogether wanting, it is easily conceivable that the sceptical historian of some future age might raise his 'Historic Doubts' on the subject; but since all the necessary criteria meet, the fact is, and must remain, indisputable. Can you detect any flaw in it?"

"No," replied Mr. Flint, "I cannot."

"I did not anticipate that you could," said I; "for it is well known that a celebrated writer of the last century,—a man who ever preferred unbelief to belief,—was for years together looking out for an instance which should have all these criteria in its favour, and yet be nevertheless false in matter of fact. But now I must proceed a step further. Are you able to allege any reason why a fact connected with *religion*, established on these grounds, would be less certain than any other fact?"

"No, certainly not," answered Mr. Flint; but the reply was given rather uneasily, and in a tone which seemed to betray a suspicion that he was admitting something which would get him into future difficulties.

"Christianity itself," I rejoined, "if it has these tests in its favour, cannot be an imposture?"

Mr. Flint gave no answer; so, after waiting a minute, I repeated the question; and at length, though with great unwillingness he replied, "I suppose not."

"Very well, sir. Now, I pray you mark what I am about to say. The rules with respect to the truth of

matters of fact (which rules, where they all meet, such matters of fact cannot be false) are these ;

1. That the matter of fact be such as that men's outward senses, their eyes and ears, may be judges of it.
2. That it be done publicly in the face of the world.
3. That not only public monuments be kept up in memory of it, but some outward actions to be performed.
4. That such monuments and such actions or observances be instituted and do commence from the time that the matter of fact was done.

Now, the first two of these rules make it impossible for a matter of fact to be imposed upon men at the time when such matter of fact was said to be done, because their senses would contradict it ; and the last two are necessary to prevent the credulity of after ages from being imposed upon, and believing that things were done in former ages which were not. These rules, you must observe, moreover, are no new discovery of my own, but were long ago known and applied, though perhaps never so forcibly stated and brought to bear upon revealed truth as in a work which, if you have not read it hitherto, will, when you *have* perused it, do all that invincible argument can do to convince you of the truth of Divine revelation,—I mean Charles Leslie's 'Short and easy Method with the Deists.' ”

“ Well, but how does all this bear upon the sacraments ? ” asked Mr. Flint rather impatiently. “ You

spoke, in the early part of this conversation, of their value as an evidence ; but you seem to have put them aside altogether."

"By no means," said I ; "I have only been clearing the way before me. I wished to bring you to an agreement with me as to what tests were necessary for the establishment of any given matter of fact, before I applied those rules to the Christian religion. My wish was to save unnecessary discussion subsequently ; and I trust I have succeeded. You have admitted the soundness of my tests ; the application of them will not detain us long. And, first, as to the publicity which attended the institution of the Gospel : you are not prepared to say, that either the miracles or the preaching of our blessed Lord did not take place publicly ; or that there was not perfect truth in his declaration to Caiaphas, that he ever spoke openly, teaching in the synagogues and Temple, and that he said nothing in secret ?"

"But some of the alleged miracles were done in secret," rejoined Mr. Flint triumphantly, "and the persons on whom they were performed were forbidden to say any thing about it ; and it was much the same, I think, with several of the most important discourses."

"No doubt there were special exceptions for special reasons ; but I am speaking of the general rule, and not of the exceptions ; and my argument will hold good, unless it can be proved that our Lord performed no one miracle in attestation of His Divine authority before the face of the world. The single act (recorded by all four evangelists) of His feeding five thousand men on five loaves and two fishes is quite sufficient for my purpose.

It was done in *public*, which is the first point; and it was a matter with respect to which men's outward senses made them competent judges. Here, then, we have all that was requisite for the satisfaction of contemporaries, and by way of evidence to us that they could not have been deceived."

Mr. Flint remained silent, for he was unable to suggest any objection; so I proceeded as nearly as I could, in the words of Leslie.

"Having applied our two first rules to the Gospel, we must now test it by the last two; and here comes in the testimony to which I alluded at the outset,—the testimony of the holy sacraments. Baptism and the supper of the Lord (*independently of their higher office*) were instituted as perpetual *memorials* of the institution of the Gospel kingdom: they were not instituted in after-ages, but at the very time that our Lord Jesus Christ was living on earth, by the Lord Himself, in commemoration of Himself, and as a token or sign, on the part of those who received them, of their communion with Him. And they have been observed, without interruption, in all ages, throughout all Christendom, down to the present hour; and the priesthood ordained by Christ Himself to administer them has continued by regular succession to this day, and no doubt shall continue while the earth lasts, living monuments of the truth of Christianity; for if the Gospel was a fiction, and invented (as under such circumstances it must be) in some age *after* Christ, then at that time when it was first invented there could be no such order of clergy as derived themselves from the institution of Christ, which, of course, must at once give

the lie to the Gospel, and demonstrate the whole to be false. And so with respect to the sacraments; as it is impossible that there could have been such things before they were invented, they must either have been introduced in the manner which the Gospel asserts, or subsequently; but they could not have been introduced subsequently, because, as we have seen, it was impossible that they should have been *then* received. And so it was as impossible to have imposed the Gospel upon mankind by inventing it in after-ages, as at the time of its alleged promulgation. Now, then," I continued, "we have tried Christianity by the tests which, on your own admission, would establish the truth of *any other* matter of fact—can you point out any reason for not admitting the truth of the Gospel? can you show where it is unable to stand the tests which have been applied to it?"

"I do not say that I can," replied Mr. Flint; "nor can I pretend to be as ready with my arguments as you are."

"Well, I do not wish you to admit in terms convictions which you do not feel. I know that 'deductions have no powers of persuasion;' still you will no doubt feel very thankful that I have established a *prima facie* case in favour of revealed religion; you will be glad to think that the presumption is that Christianity is true. I am quite aware that I have left many points untouched, and that many might have been put much more forcibly; but I have said enough, I hope, to induce you to study Leslie's tract with carefulness and an honest heart."

"Since you express so much eagerness on the subject, I will certainly do so. But——"

"But what?" said I anxiously.

"Why, I can't promise that, even if he does seem unanswerable so far as argument goes, I shall be able to cast off doubts, and become all at once ready to take things for granted. I have been too long a free inquirer to do that."

"Alas, alas!" I replied, "I fear you have. I never anticipated that either you or any other skeptic would be brought to admit the truth solely because your *reason* is convinced. It is a step gained to show you, by arguments that you cannot gainsay and which your conscience admits, that Christianity *must* be true; but it is *only* a step; the rest must depend upon yourself,—the mastering of an unbelieving will, and the bringing it into such subjection as that it shall no longer shrink from coming to the light, *lest its deeds should be reproved!* May God guide you, sir, into the way of truth; and give you strength to walk in it!"



The Events of a Day.

E'en here the night of darkness streaking,
Light on our dim-seen path is breaking ;
To cheer and tell of life's awakening breath,
E'en in the ghastly forms of pain, and guilt, and death
It is not ill--disease's fever'd sting—
That fits my soul to worship Thee :
It is not ill--the fear that makes me cling
More closely to my Parent's knee.

SEWELL'S Sacred Thoughts.





CHAPTER XI.

I NEVER had a case which made me feel my own weakness and insufficiency more powerfully than Mr. Flint's. He did not seem to me an irreclaimable infidel; and yet I could bring my mind to no certainty as to what course would afford me the best chance, humanly speaking, of reclaiming him. I had gained an advantage over him in argument; but I could by no means satisfy myself whether it was most prudent to press that advantage further, or to leave him some days for reflection, before I recurred to the subject of our late conversation. What an arduous, anxious task was mine! Who but they that have experienced them can adequately conceive the agonizing fears which every clergyman must from time to time experience in those special cases, wherein the only chance of a sinner's awakening to repentance seems, so far as secondary means are concerned, to depend on the judgment, the prudence, the discretion of his spiritual attendant?—where to do *too much* is to confirm in obstinacy, and to do *too little* is to leave the transgressor in his perilous security? Who is there of my clerical brethren that has not felt it like a

weight of lead upon his conscience, that in the day of account he may have to answer, on the one hand, for

“The voice postpon’d, which timely heard
Had saved a brother’s soul ;
Rebukes we check’d, lest erring youth
Should mock or turn away ;
And fears which veil’d the dawning truth,
Lest truth should lead astray :”

and on the other, for acts of misjudging, untimely zeal, which have raised an impenetrable barrier against the admission of truth ; for pouring the new wine into old bottles, and thereby causing the bottles to burst, and the wine to be spilled ? Well may we ask ourselves as we reflect upon the difficulties in our path, “ Who is sufficient for these things ? ” Well will it be for us, if, while bearing upon our hearts the comfortable assurance that our sufficiency is of God, we still watch over actions and motives as anxiously as if every thing depended on ourselves ; as if in very truth

——“our souls were plac’d
In one another’s power.”

Upon the best consideration I could give the matter, I thought it most desirable to allow Mr. Flint time to reflect upon our conversation, in the hope that meanwhile conscience would do her work, and come effectually to my aid : however, as I heard he was shortly going to London, I resolved not to postpone my visit for more than a day or two. Accordingly, about noon on the third day after I had parted from Mr. Flint, I turned my steps once more to Baggesden.

It was now early in April ; but from the backwardness of the season, one might have supposed it to be February. A winter of unusual severity had terminated about the middle of March with a very deep fall of snow, succeeded, at the end of a week, by a sudden and very rapid thaw. Heavy rains then set in, and continued without intermission till the morning of which I am speaking, which rose bright and cheerful ; and the sun, which had not been seen for several days, gleamed forth once more, though its rays were still from time to time obscured by masses of heavy white clouds, which a brisk though softened wind was driving rapidly from west to east.

The consequences of such an abundance of rain would have been very perceptible even in a hilly country, but it had converted our broad meadows into a vast lake of turbid water, through the midst of which the course of the river was just distinguishable by the more rapid progress of the fleecy crests of foam, and the wreck and pieces of timber which, floating on its surface, were hurried on till some accidental obstruction diverted their course from the main channel, and they were gradually borne in eddying circles to the stiller waters which inundated our pastures and mowing-fields. As far as the eye could reach in one direction from the windows of the vicarage, I could see nothing but water ; and but for the lines of hedgerow-trees at intervals, and here and there a hovel or a hay rick just raised above the level of the flood, I could have fancied it a permanent, instead of a mere transient, feature in the landscape—the mighty stream which a geological friend assures me must once have covered the broad surface of our valley. On the day to which I am alluding, the inunda-

tion was at its height ; and as I watched its irresistible progress from the highest eminence I could gain, and more than once heard the cry of some living thing hurried along by the roaring waters, I could not but think that the devastating power of this element is even more fearful than that of fire itself. But habit accustoms us to every thing ; and floods being very common with us in spring and autumn, I soon began to direct my thoughts to other matters, and had not remarked that it was a much higher flood than usual—or at least had not felt certain of it—till, on getting upon the high road between Baggesden and Yateshull, I perceived that the waters covered it to a greater extent than I had yet seen. My own further progress, however, was not cut off ; for in consequence of that part of the road being frequently inundated, a narrow wooden causeway had been raised upon piles along one side of the road, for a sufficient distance, to enable foot-passengers to pass on their way dryshod. On the present occasion, this structure (which was about four feet from the ground) was in one place a few inches under water ; but as there were posts and rails on either side, the traveller could, by dint of a little scrambling, still keep out of the wet.

I was standing on this causeway, looking at the broad expanse of waters,—and, if the truth must be told, pursuing the not very intellectual occupation of watching the floating bits of sticks and straw enter it on one side and emerge on the other,—when I heard the approach of some vehicle in the direction of Baggesden ; and, on looking up, saw Mr. Flint's bailiff in a gig well loaded with carpet-bags and bonnet-boxes, driving a lady whom I immediately recognised to be Miss Chickweed. I

was wondering under what possible emergency she could have condescended to submit to such an undignified mode of conveyance, when it struck me that she would probably get a good deal splashed in going through the water in the gig; and I therefore hurried forward, and called out that she had much better be set down at one end of the causeway and taken up at the other. She started on hearing my voice; but, instead of answering me, said something to her companion, who immediately whipped his horse and proceeded through the water. I knew there was not, and could not be, the slightest danger; but I stood where I was, to offer any assistance, if it should be needed.

"Well, sir," cried the lady as she drew near, "do you expect to see us drowned, or what, that you stand staring in that way? You're very rude, sir, and unmannerly."

I might well stare, for Miss Chickweed was in a most towering passion; and how or why I could have excited it I was at a loss to imagine; so I stood speechless, and stared probably ten times more.

"Insufferable impertinence, to stand staring like a stuck pig, instead of assisting us!" cried the governess once more.

"How can I help you ma'am? You are too far in now to get upon the causeway, I think."

"Bless you, ma'am," cried the bailiff, "there's no manner of danger; if you'll only sit quiet, we shall be out directly."

But Miss Chickweed, who had at first dashed in so boldly, now grew frightened at finding the water deeper than she had expected, and apparently resolved to turn

back ; so, without saying a word, she seized the reins and gave the horse a sudden and violent check : but Dobbin, instead of backing, turned short round, and in the act of doing so, stumbled and fell, scattering a heavy shower in all directions. Miss Chickweed screamed violently ; and at the same moment perceiving that as the horse got on his legs again, he had backed the gig within a few feet of the causeway, she took the sudden resolution of reaching it by a jump. Jump accordingly she did, and no doubt would have got a firm and dry footing without difficulty, but, as ill-luck would have it, in the very act of leaping, some part of her dress caught on the button intended to secure the leather apron of the gig, and thereby gave her such a sudden check, that down she came head foremost into the turbid stream. In half a minute she was safe on the causeway, for the water was not much more than a yard deep, and there was no difficulty in getting out of it ; but she had been soused from head to foot, and could not have had a particle of dry clothing upon her.

Of course I made her all possible tenders of assistance ; but all I got for my pains was a torrent of abuse, which for rapidity and foulness surpassed the flood beneath us. Meanwhile the bailiff had got his horse and gig safe through the water to the other side. Conceiving, however, that Miss Chickweed's first object would be to get home again as fast as she could, I was about to bid him cross once more, but the lady interrupted me.

"No, sir, I would rather die of cold than set foot again under a roof where I have been so grossly insulted. I've turned my back upon your pudding-headed squire and

his odious brats, and I wouldn't enter those walls again if they begged it on their knees."

I am sincerely happy to hear it, thought I; but as there was no need of saying so, I offered to accompany the shivering governess to the vicarage; my housekeeper, I said, would pay her every attention. But no, Yateshull vicarage was in no greater favour than Baggesden Hall. She would be obliged to none of us, she said; and wanted nothing but to get out of a neighbourhood where the natives were ignorant boors, and their very roads were impassable.

So getting into the gig once more, and telling her attendant to drive to the inn, she took her departure, leaving me in a state of very considerable amazement and curiosity.

Upon reaching Baggesden Hall, I found Mr. Flint pacing up and down his library in a great passion, and trying to cool himself, I imagine, according to the received mode with angry people, namely, by taking a great deal of unnecessary exercise.

"Well, Mr. Warlingham," he exclaimed, "I suppose you have heard all about my precious governess—'the treasure,' 'the jewel of a woman'—that was to be so invaluable to me and my children?"

"No, indeed, I have not, sir," I replied; "but I can give you the latest intelligence of her." I then related, as briefly as possible, the scene I had just witnessed, but not without interruptions on Mr. Flint's part; for no sooner had I mentioned that she jumped out of the gig, than I was saluted with the charitable aspiration,—

"And I hope she broke her neck." And on my fur-

ther intimating the mishap that attended the leap, Mr. Flint slapped his hand upon his thigh, and said he would have given a hundred pounds to have seen it; and he was only sorry she had been able to get out again.

"Why what can have happened, sir, since I saw you last, to make you change your opinion of Miss Chickweed? I thought she had your entire confidence."

"I always thought her an odious woman; but that, you know, all governesses are. At any rate," said Mr. Flint, seeing me smile at so very sweeping a condemnation, "I have a natural antipathy to the race; but this person was so highly recommended by Mandevyl's sister, Mrs. Foxlove ——"

"Excuse me, sir, for interrupting you—but the lady you allude to is a great politician, is she not?"

"Oh, yes; her husband was in the Whig cabinet."

"But she is divorced—is she not?"

"No, no, not divorced, only separated; they tried a divorce, but it wouldn't do."

I shook my head.

"Ah, I see what you mean, Mr. Warlingham; I oughtn't to have gone to such a quarter for an instructress to my children. Well, as it has turned out, I believe I had better not; but you don't know Mrs. Foxlove—so clever, so amiable, so graceful, such perfect manners. I don't believe half what the world says of her."

"It is the part of true charity," said I, "to think no evil; but whether you should have carried it so far as to consult Mrs. Foxlove about your little girls' education, is another thing."

"Why, I knew nothing about girls; only, as I wanted

to see them clever, and liberal, and all that, and all Mandevyl's connexions were so much in that way, I thought it best to consult him. But I'll tell you what," continued Mr. Flint, setting his teeth, and quivering with anger, "I have bought my experience; and if I go to them again for a recommendation, may I ——"

"You have not yet told me how Miss Chickweed has offended you," said I, interposing; for I was glad to cut short a sentence which was taking a somewhat ominous turn.

"It puts me in such a rage, Mr. Warlingham, whenever I think of it, that I cannot control myself; but I will tell you, if it be only to punish myself for having been taken in by her. Probably you are not aware that my intention was to have been half way to London by this time. Business connected with my Lancashire property unexpectedly forced me to go up to town, and at nine o'clock this morning I was ready to start, and had taken leave of the children; but just as I was getting into the carriage, it occurred to me that I had omitted to give the bailiff some directions; so I went on foot the short way to the farm, leaving orders that the chaise should follow me by the road. Well, when I got there, John Bentley was gone out, and so it was half an hour or more before I could get away. I had barely driven a hundred yards, however, before I made the discovery that I had left all my letters behind me in this room; but as I didn't choose to send a servant for them, I ran through the fields, and, entering by the conservatory-door, which was open, the first sight that greeted me was Miss Chickweed in that arm-chair, reading one of my letters, and

the rest lying upon her lap. Properly she jumped, I can tell you, when she heard my first exclamation."

"But what did she say?"

"Say? an impudent virago! she was rather confounded at first, certainly; but as soon as she recovered herself, she rated me soundly for leaving my letters about—told me that letters left on a table were as much the property of the public as the newspaper. But you may guess that I answered her; and I do suppose that I stormed not a little."

"What followed?" I asked.

"Why, I conclude, she foresaw that I should dismiss her on the spot, and so she was sharp enough (before I could get the words out of my mouth) to say that she had no notion of being spoken to in that way, and that she wouldn't stay in the house an hour longer, and so bounced out of the room. I was in such a passion I hardly knew what I did; but as soon as I got a little cooler, I began to fold up the letters which she had thrown on the table, and, while doing so, discovered that she had left behind her the book she was reading—a book I certainly had *heard* of, but never expected to see under my roof. Sir, it is, I believe, about the foulest specimen of profligacy to be found in the whole range of French literature; I read but a single sentence before I threw the vile trash into the fire."

"Well, I must say I never heard any thing more disgraceful or distressing."

"Oh, but I have not done yet. Of course I was not going to allow her so much as to see the children again, so I ran up to the school-room to bring them down stairs:

as soon as I got near the door, I fancied I heard a kind of moaning; and on opening it, found my poor little Susan lying on the floor, tied hand foot, and bleeding at the mouth. Fortunately she was not much hurt, only her lip somewhat cut and swollen; but—will you believe it?—this Miss Chickweed had, by way of a punishment, tied her in this way, and set her to sit upon a high stool till she returned: of course, as soon as the poor child moved, she fell forward to the ground, and might have lain there for hours, or, at least, till Miss Chickweed had finished routing among my papers; for as soon as she supposed me to be gone, she sent Mary out with one of the maids; and as for Julian, she told him not to let her see his face till dinner-time—so where he is I know not. Meanwhile, here I am prevented from going to London: and business of the greatest importance must be left undone. However, I shall never see that woman's face again—that's one comfort; and she has been well frightened and well drenched—and those are two more comforts, and very sufficient ones."

And Mr. Flint was right—he never did see Miss Chickweed's face again; but she contrived to persuade two or three ladies, whose principles agreed with her own, that, so far from being guilty of any outrage at Baggesden Hall, she had herself been the victim of a conspiracy; that, in spite of her devotion to his children, the squire had persecuted her for her liberal opinions, till she had thrown up her situation in disgust; and that so rancorous were his satellites against her, that on the day she quitted Baggesden, the parson had actually bribed the driver of her carriage to upset her into the water. It was impossible not to feel deep interest in a

person who had been so treated; and accordingly Miss Chickweed's friends exerted themselves so effectually, that she became preceptress and companion to the young Duchess of Stockport and Bullock-Smithy; and, late in life, her intellectual acquirements (or the annuity settled on her by the duchess) so far captivated Dr. Glibbe, the celebrated itinerant lecturer on political economy, that (although he had at the time a wife and six children) he made her an offer of his hand, which was immediately accepted; and it will be interesting to posterity to know that this well-assorted pair were the first couple who, availing themselves of the new law, were married in a register-office, instead of a church.

Mr. Flint's mind was so pre-occupied with the events of the morning, that any attempt on my part to renew the subject of our last conversation would have been not only injudicious but impossible, and I therefore did not attempt it. Nor did I think it necessary to dwell upon the evils of admitting teachers of the *genus Chickweed* into a family which had no mother's watchful eye to superintend it. I was convinced that Mr. Flint had been taught a lesson which he would not easily forget; and I felt I could not do better than leave him to his own reflections.

I was therefore unwilling to prolong my visit; and was in the act of taking leave, when the door opened, and Michael Foster entered. The moment my eye glanced at his face, I saw that he was struggling with agitation, which he attempted but vainly to conceal; something terrible had happened, which he knew not how to break to his master.

Mr. Flint did not immediately look up—he was occupied with something else ; but the moment he did, he exclaimed, “ Why, Michael, what’s the matter ? Have you seen a ghost ? ”

“ No, sir ; but I came in to see if master Julian was come home. I was feeling anxious —— ”

“ Anxious—Julian—why what *has* happened ? ”

“ God forbid that any thing has happened, sir ; but he went out after breakfast, and wanted the keeper to go out sailing with him ; but Wilson could not go, and so sent his son Tom, who is but a boy, not much bigger than my young master. ”

“ Oh, is that all ? ” said Mr. Flint looking much relieved ; “ Tom Wilson is a very steady lad, and knows what he is about. ”

“ Yes, sir ; but —— ”

“ But what ? ”

“ William Smith’s wife has seen within this hour a boat floating down by the alder-tree walk bottom upwards ; she don’t know whose boat it was, but it looked like one of ours, she said. ”

I am sure I cannot attempt to describe the confusion which ensued on this announcement, or the agony which was stamped upon every feature of Mr. Flint’s countenance, as the probable fate of his darling child presented itself to his mind. “ He’s lost ! he must be lost ! ” he exclaimed : “ how could they think of going out in such a flood ? But it’s my own fault ; nobody’s fault but mine. I ought never to have left him, as I have done, with nobody to look after him ! ”

Old Michael had not come to Mr. Flint till he had

position. Here, however, the boat was no longer to be seen, and there was no vestige of those who had occupied it. Mr. Flint bade the rowers go forward, and hid his face in his hands; but the convulsive heaving of his breast showed the intensity of a parent's agony. In a few minutes more the missing object caught my eye: entangled among the trunks of some trees I saw an oar, and a little further a boat which had evidently been capsized. Mr. Flint looked at it; and in the terrible groan which burst from him, and the distressed countenances of the poor fellows that accompanied us, I read but too surely their conviction that it was *the* boat which Julian and his companion had occupied.

Thinking it possible that they might have saved themselves by clinging to some tree, I shouted, and bade the rowers shout with me; but there was no voice, neither any that answered: the only sounds, when our voices ceased, were the hoarse murmuring of the rushing water, and the cry of a few frightened water-fowl. We repeated the shout, and this time the water only was heard.

"It is useless—it is useless," cried Mr. Flint; "even if we had been on the spot, we could hardly have saved them—we can do no good here;" and he sunk back in his seat in a state of almost insensibility.

"God comfort you, sir," said I; "and He *will* comfort you even in this hour, if you commit yourself to Him, and strive to submit your will to His." My unhappy companion only answered by a fresh groan.

Seeing that he was incapable of giving directions, the rowers now looked to me; and I, feeling that the catastrophe must have happened higher up the river, perhaps

near the place where the woman had first seen the boat, desired them to turn back, and proceed in that direction. It was hard work pulling against such a stream; but we were soon within the confines of the alder-tree walk once more. Following my instructions, they got as near the bank as they could; and there, at a spot where the trees very much overhang the river, we saw a boy's hat caught in a bough—not Julian's, but Tom Wilson's,—the men felt sure it was Tom Wilson's: and, from the position in which it hung, it was manifest that the owner must have been in the tree, *not in the river*, at the time it was lost. There was even yet, then, a gleam of hope; for if the boys had once contrived to get upon the level of the walk, (which at this place was considerably above the usual height of the river,) there was no longer any danger of their being carried off by the force of the stream; and although a long space of water must be passed before they could reach dry land, the rowers confidently asserted that in no part of it would they be out of their depth.

While hope was thus kindled in our hearts, a single shout was heard from the land, and in a second or two repeated; and by and by more voices were heard, as if numbers were gathering towards one spot. Some discovery had been made, but of what nature who could tell? We could see nothing; and there was nothing in the distant sounds that conveyed to us any definite impression of joy or sorrow. And there were we, unable to approach the spot from which the sounds came except by a circuitous route, and with the rapid current against us. I believe we all felt that interval of suspense a far heavier trial to endure than all the previous misery: but

the honest fellows who were labouring at their oars exerted themselves with tenfold energy ; and at length we approached a knoll, which, rising abruptly from the river's edge, afforded the certainty of a practicable landing-place. But ere we reached it, we had been already descried from the shore ; and more than one glad voice shouted that the boys were found, and both alive. Mr. Flint clasped his hands, as if in prayer, and burst into a flood of tears.

In a few moments more the boat had reached the shore, and we were hurrying forward to join the crowd of people whom we saw in the distance. As we approached it, the people parted on either side to admit us ; and in an instant Mr. Flint was embracing a form, all but lifeless with cold and exhaustion, yet still a *living* form.

Our anticipations proved entirely correct ; the current had been so strong in that part of the river which was opposite the alder-tree walk, that the boys had lost all control of their boat, which was dashed against a tree and upset : in the very moment, however, of the catastrophe, Tom Wilson had been able to get secure hold of a projecting bough of an alder-tree ; and, dragging his young master with him, they contrived to scramble along the branches, and so reach a place of comparative security, while they saw the boat drifting away with its bottom upwards in the midst of the roaring flood. In the tree they continued a considerable time, till Julian felt so chilled, and there seemed so little prospect of any help being afforded them, that at length they determined to make the experiment of wading out of the reach of the

flood. As they knew where they were, there was no great difficulty, provided only they could keep within their depth, and avoid the ditches. So they left the tree; and after more than one most providential escape from drowning upon what was usually dry land, they reached the spot where they were found, so exhausted that they could go no further, after having been not less than two hours in the water.

All this was, of course, learned subsequently; for the poor lads were in no condition to answer questions—indeed there had been great doubt at first whether Julian had still life in him. To convey the sufferers to Baggesden Hall was out of the question—it was two miles off: fortunately the vicarage was only a fourth part of that distance, and Mr. Flint gladly assented to my proposal that they should be conveyed thither.

It was a mournful cavalcade that entered my wicket-gate; for it was impossible not to see that a tender frame like Julian's was not likely to escape with impunity from so severe a shock. Still, while there was life there was hope; and I could not but feel, that in the events of that day a door had been providentially opened to me, by means of which I might exert a beneficial influence over father and son. I had of late been sad and discouraged at what had begun to appear the hopeless task of bringing Mr. Flint back to the truth from which he had fallen: arguments for the truth of Christianity had little or no weight with him; and I could find no means to reach his conscience. But that which is impossible with man is possible with God; and in the mingled chastisement and mercy of the last few hours there seemed enough to touch and awaken the hardest heart.

Chastening.

Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom, 1

Lead Thou me on!

The night is dark, and I am far from home—

Lead Thou me on!

Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see

The distant scene,—one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou

Shouldst lead me on.

I loved to choose and see my path; but now

Lead thou me on!

I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,

Pride ruled my will: remember not past years.

Lyra Apostolica.





CHAPTER XII.

OF the two sufferers, so unexpectedly admitted under my roof, there was one who gave us very little anxiety. Tom Wilson, strong by constitution, and hardy by education, having been exposed from his earliest years to all the vicissitudes of weather, felt but small inconvenience from the fatigues and perils of the day. Dry clothes, warmth, and food, and then a good night's rest, so far restored him, that by the next morning a little stiffness was the only malady of which he complained. But it was not so with Julian; he passed a sleepless night, and was soon in a high fever: the shock had been too great for his delicate and susceptible frame, and for many days it seemed probable that he would not survive. Being a case in which the most profound quiet was enjoined, silence was, of course, imposed both upon himself and his attendants: and so Mr. Flint had little else to do but to sit, hour after hour, by his poor boy's bedside; and there he sat, looking wistfully in his face, or holding his burning hand. Probably Mr. Flint had never had before so many hours of quiet reflection, and it was impossible but that his thoughts must have reverted to his past life; he must have begun to feel acutely his want of *something*

better than stoic philosophy to enable him to endure his present trial ; he needed that anchor of the soul sure and steadfast, wherewith alone, amid the waves of this troublesome world, the heart of man can be stayed and kept secure. And I could not but hope that the conversations we had had together might now recur to his memory, and at least make him better disposed to think more seriously of religion than he had done hitherto. I observed one thing with satisfaction, which was, that he regularly attended my family prayers morning and evening ; and he more than once expressed his conviction of the beneficial effects which such a custom must produce in a household in which it is established. It was possible, indeed, that what he did and said in this matter might rather be the result of good breeding, and a wish to show respect to me personally, by cheerful acquiescence in the ways of the house ; but still it was something that he should have got over his repugnance to attend religious worship of any kind.

Julian was for many days too ill for me to be of any service to him in my ministerial capacity. My prayers *for* him, indeed, I trust, were not unheard ; but prayers *with* him were out of the question—the physicians absolutely prohibited it. In about a fortnight, however, after the accident, Dr. Bailey told me I might propose it, adding, that he thought very likely it might be of essential service to the patient, who seemed, he said, to have something hanging on his spirits, and depressing him. “You must talk to him, and cheer him up, Mr. Warlingham,” continued the kind old man ; I can’t bear to see a boy of

his age with a careworn look: it is a worse symptom than any that are left about him."

Upon entering the sick chamber, I found the patient lying as usual with his hand in his father's; and his countenance had certainly that anxious abstracted look to which the physician had alluded. On seeing me, however, he brightened up; and, stretching out his other hand, said he was so glad he was allowed to speak a little, because he had been longing to thank me for my kindness to him.

"Well, Julian," said I, "if it gives you pleasure to receive kindness from me, I promise you that it affords me pleasure to show it; so now we are even, as far as the obligation is concerned: but there is One to whom we all owe a debt of gratitude which we never can repay. I am sure *we*, above all people, have cause to say that His mercies are infinite, and therefore let us pay our first tribute of thanks to *Him*."

"Him? I suppose you mean God," said Julian, in a tone which gave me some surprise; and then added, in a tone which surprised me still more, "the doctor told me I was better—do you think I am going to die?"

"Die, my dear boy!" exclaimed Mr. Flint; "no: why should you talk about dying: you *have* been very ill, but the danger is over."

"What is your opinion, Mr. Warlingham?" asked Julian.

"There seems every ground of hope that you will do well," said I: "it is because you have made such progress towards recovery, and have escaped, as it were, from the very jaws of death, that I proposed to you that

we should now offer up our thanksgivings to the Author of all our mercies."

"Shall I tell you what *I* think and what *I* feel?" continued Julian, in the same tone of indifference.

"Well, tell us, my dear boy," said Mr. Flint.

"I think that you, Papa, and you, Mr. Warlingham, and the doctor, are all wrong: I *shall die*—I know I shall."

"Do not say so—do not speak in such a way; are you not feeling so well?" cried the anxious father.

"Yes, papa, quite as well as when Dr. Bailey saw me; but I never shall get over this illness, you will see. I don't expect to die to-day, or to-morrow, perhaps; but I feel something within me, I don't know how to explain it, but different from what I ever had before; and, though my fever is gone, I shall get worse, and I shall die."

Mr. Flint looked at me in grave apprehension, and as if he thought the fever was returning; but he said nothing.

"Papa," continued Julian, "I shall die before long; and so I want to ask you one question. When poor dear mamma was dying, she told us that the only things that gave her comfort were the holy sacrament, and reading the Bible, and joining in the Church-prayers. You know the Weymouth clergyman used to come to her every day; and Mr. Warlingham, I am sure, wishes to do the same by me. Is it not so, sir?"

Of course I assented.

"Now, papa, I wish to do what is right: but you have raised a great difficulty in my mind. You do not seem to find the comfort in the Church and the holy com-

munion which mamma did, for you do not attend them ; but I am not thinking so much of this as of what you did to me. You made me read books which seemed to throw doubts on the truth of the Bible ; and you forbade my reading any more out of Bishop Taylor's 'Holy Living and Dying.' It was the book mamma loved most—she had it on her bed when she died ; but I have never read in it since—I have never said the prayers (though I know some of them by heart) which are contained in it. Papa, what am I to believe—what am I to do ? I shall die, I know I shall ; but, whether I live or die, I cannot bear to be as I am. You have told me one thing, mamma has told me another—what am I to do ?”

Throughout the whole of this conversation Julian had kept his eyes fixed full in his father's face, and had seen that face change from pale to red, and from red to pale again : once Mr. Flint tried to raise his hand to shade it, but the boy laid his own hand on his father's, and prevented it. It was evident that Mr. Flint was confounded ; but his son had no intention of letting him escape without giving a definite answer. So, while Mr. Flint was hesitating and casting about what to say, Julian continued :

“ Papa, I cannot leave the world in doubt. Why may I not have the same comfort that mamma had ? What good can I get by doubting ? Why am I to disbelieve what she told me, and what Mr. Warlingham tells us every Sunday, and what my Bible tells me, and my conscience tells me ? Can it do me any harm to believe ? Is it not *safest* ? Do you really wish me to leave this world without one of the comforts that mamma had—she that died so humble and so happy ?” And the tears ran

down the poor boy's face as he spoke of his mother, and added, "Can I be better off than where she is? Oh, my dear papa, why would you cut me off from the blessedness of prayer?"

It was now Mr. Flint's turn to weep. A scene so unexpected, and so affecting, produced an instantaneous effect on a heart already prepared by suspense and suffering to admit its own wilfulness and weakness: for a while there had been a struggle (as his changing features evinced) between pride and shame and the better feelings of his nature; but Julian had hardly finished speaking, when his agitated parent burst into a flood of tears, and then raising an appealing look to me, sobbed forth the words, "*Let us pray;*" and, falling on his knees, buried his face in the bed-clothes.

It required some self-command at such an agitating moment to avoid giving way to the feelings which had overpowered my companions; but I did control myself, and, taking a Prayer-book, commenced, though with a faltering voice, the 51st Psalm, then the 130th, and after that the confession in the communion-service, and so proceeded to the order for the visitation of the sick, from whence I gathered all that seemed needful in addition for the spiritual wants of my companions: then, having risen from my knees, I proceeded to leave the apartment immediately, (for, indeed, I felt that what was then likely to pass between Mr. Flint and his son was too sacred to be intruded on;) but as I was passing from the bedside, I saw so much excitement in Julian's face and whole frame, that I paused to intreat him to remain quite quiet for some time to come. Alas, I advised in vain; but per-

haps it was not in human nature that it should have fallen out otherwise.

Having some parochial business to transact that afternoon, I was absent from home for three or four hours ; and on my return, overtook Mr. Flint at a short distance from the vicarage. He did not raise his eyes to meet mine ; but he took my hand with a warmth that expressed more than many words. He believed, he said, that he had stayed with Julian for about an hour after I was gone. They had had some comfortable talk together, he added, and then he had left him, as the poor lad seemed more anxious to talk than to rest ; and he fancied that he was growing hoarse, and did not breathe quite so well.

I did not hear this announcement without apprehension, and began to regret that I had not stayed with the patient, and prevented his further exciting himself with conversation. It was evident that Mr. Flint, with his robust frame and active habits, knew nothing personally of sickness and disease, and had no acquired experience to guide him in his attendance upon Julian. The consequence was that he was, through ignorance, a very bad nurse ; but this was a fact which I had not the opportunity of discovering till it was too late.

Within an hour from the time when I overtook Mr. Flint, and returned with him to the vicarage, Julian was seized with a violent fit of coughing, and in the midst of the paroxysm broke a blood-vessel. The medical attendant was fortunately in the house at the time it happened ; and therefore all that human aid could do was done, and well done, without loss of time. But the patient was reduced to a state of extreme peril ; and even if

he recovered the present seizure, there could not but be grave apprehension for the future. The vehemence of Mr. Flint's distress and agitation, when the event occurred, was so great, and he was so utterly unable to control his feelings, that the physician was obliged to lead him out of the room, and interdict his return to it. "I have killed him—I know I have," was the continual cry of the unhappy parent, as he paced about the drawing-room, with clenched hands and a face of ashy paleness; and more than once I heard him mutter between his teeth, "But I have deserved it all—ay, were it ten times more; I have brought it all upon myself."

All that I could offer in the way of consolation, or suggest in the hope of leading him to that entire submission to God's will, which can alone bring peace to the sufferer, seemed to be heard without being comprehended. His mind was as yet in too unsettled a state for religion to be any thing but a burden to it. He mourned as one that would not be comforted, and if he did not murmur, his silence was rather that of despair than resignation; when he did speak, it was to repeat the terrible self-reproach that he had killed his child.

At the end of a week, I was admitted once more to Julian's apartment, with the understanding that, though he was not to be allowed to speak, there would be no objection to my reading prayers beside him. Sad, indeed, was the change which had taken place in that short interval; the ruddy hue of youth and health had faded from a cheek pale and bleached from loss of blood, and sunken with the severe discipline he had undergone; his eyes had lost their lustre, and the dark, livid appearance of the skin

immediately beneath them made so great a contrast to what I had been used to see, that I could hardly recognise him as one who but a short time ago was the very picture of life and health. And when our devotions were concluded, and he raised his hand from among the bed-clothes to take hold of mine, I was even more shocked ; the bones and blue veins seemed, as it were, in contact with the skin, and there was that transparent look about them which is so common in cases of rapid decline ; but there was a sweet expression of rest, and patience, and calm resignation in the dear boy's face, and a something impossible to describe, but which seemed to express that he was taking leave of life. And I was subsequently convinced that I had not read that expression wrong ; for before I left the room he put into my hands a small packet, on the exterior of which he had written in pencil, with unsteady hand, "In remembrance of Julian Flint : a keepsake for my dear friend, Mr. Warlingham—*not to be opened yet.*" A tear rolled down his cheek as he extended the parcel towards me ; and, as I read its inscription, my own eyes were dry no longer. But we neither of us spoke ; and when I had pressed his hand in token of my thanks, I quitted the sick-chamber with a sad foreboding that the noble, tender-hearted boy would ere long be removed from us ; but certainly without an apprehension that I should never see his living face again.

Yet so it was. The next day he seemed so much better that his father was admitted to see him ; and a promise was given that, if all went well, he should see his sisters—his "darling sisters," as he loved to call them—before the week's end. But how awfully true it is, that

in the midst of life we are in death ! While his father was sitting by the bedside, Julian gave a slight cough ; it was followed, in a few moments, by another hardly more severe ; but the poor boy seemed desirous of raising himself Mr. Flint bent forward to assist him ; at the same instant the cough was repeated, the blood-vessel again gave way, a crimson torrent burst forth from the sufferer's mouth and nose—there was a gasping, gurgling noise of suffocation—a slight shiver—and then the eyes closed, the head fell back, and that gentle spirit returned to God who gave it !

Michael Foster was the only person in the room besides Mr. Flint when the event occurred ; and so instantaneously did it take place, that he had scarcely time (as he afterwards informed me) to run across the chamber, and ring the bell for more help, before help was unavailing. As for the bereaved parent, he could not realize to himself that Julian was no more ; but continued rubbing the dead boy's hands with increased vehemence, and could not be induced to quit the bedside, till the medical attendant, who arrived about an hour after, declared that hope was at an end, and that life had been so long extinct that the corpse was growing cold and stiff.

Mr. Flint then suffered himself to be led out of the room, as passively as if he had been a child ; he said nothing, shed no tear, sat down at once in the chair we offered him, and there remained with his eyes fixed on the opposite wall ; he now and then shuddered, and there was an involuntary twitching of the corners of the mouth ; but otherwise he seemed as if he were wholly unconscious of what was passing round him. Finding that I

could be of no service, I followed Michael Foster's suggestion, and went up to Baggesden Hall to break to the two little girls the event of their brother's death. It was a grievous task ; but when the first shock was over, their tears flowed abundantly, and nature gave them that relief which she had hitherto denied their parent.

After a while I returned home, but found my unhappy guest sitting just as I had left him, and not having spoken once in the interval. I read prayers with him, or rather for him, and he knelt as I offered them, but he hardly seemed to know what he was doing; later in the day we offered him food, but he could not touch it. At night he went to bed at the usual time, and I had hoped that he might get some sleep; but Michael, (himself all but heartbroken, yet exerting himself to the utmost,) who sat up with him, was unable, the next morning, to say for certain that his master had closed his eyes.

And this state of things continued for some days longer, with hardly any alteration ; even the sight of his poor boy lying in his coffin failed to produce more than a transient effect upon him. He gazed on the calm, pale face, which even death had not stripped of the beautiful expression which it had worn in life, and which now had a placid sweetness about it that seemed hardly to belong to this world ; but the sight drew no tears—he gazed for a minute or so, and then, with a passionate cry, flung himself from the room, and never showed the slightest disposition to return to it. At length the physician grew uneasy, and recommended that he should be removed to Baggesden Hall : the sight of that place, and reunion

with his surviving children, might, it was hoped, rouse him from the stupor of grief.

Thither, therefore, he went ; but the change seemed rather to augment his misery than relieve it. This was to be expected at first ; and the burst of grief consequent upon an arrival at home was probably that to which Dr. Bailey looked, as being likely in the end to produce a beneficial result : but we were disappointed—he became more abstracted and silent than ever ; and before he had been at Baggesden many hours, he became seriously ill,—so ill, that his attendance at Julian’s funeral was out of the question.

The morning after the last sad rites had been performed, I repaired to Baggesden Hall early, and read in Michael Foster’s swollen eyes and worn-out look the intelligence that his master was no better. On being admitted to Mr. Flint, he received me as gladly as he had always done of late ; and he muttered something, not very coherently, which seemed to intimate that he had a comfort in my presence—that in times past he did not know me,—had been prejudiced against me ; but that now he found me standing by him, while none of his old associates came near him. I was not sorry to hear him remark upon the fact, but observed that my profession gave me privileges which the persons he spoke of did not possess. I did that as a matter of course, which, if done by them, might seem an indelicate intrusion.

“ Well, well, I want nobody but you—I will see nobody but you.”

“ The time has been, my dear sir,” said I, “ when as you have just said, you had no such wishes, and when,

if you remember, you spoke as if nothing could bring alleviation under bereavement but time itself. I think you have other feelings now."

I said this with the object of recalling to Mr. Flint's mind the conversation (recorded in a former chapter) which took place between us on his wife's death, and of thus reminding him of the change which since that time had gradually been taking place in his hopes and feelings. He did not now, as then, glory in his shame; he had no pride in professing skeptical opinions.

My companion's only reply, in the first instance, was a groan; but, after a pause, he said, "Ah, Mr. Warlingham, the only difference now is, that my misery is tenfold deeper than it was then: I have been brought to see the truth of religion only to find that He whom I have offended is pouring out the vials of His vengeance upon me. What gain is there in this?"

"Even admitting the case to be as you describe it, I should contend that there was a great and positive gain. If God is awakening you by judgments in this world, instead of allowing you to fall into certain and eternal perdition in the next, surely, surely you are being mercifully dealt with. You have been guilty of the greatest affront to Him of which a creature can be guilty: I do not mean to say that there may not be extenuating circumstances in your case; but your life has been one of unbelief, and, I fear, of great immorality besides: you have not only broken the vows you made at baptism, but you have actually renounced your allegiance. What wonder, then, if God should pour upon you the cup of trembling, and should make you feel His vengeance?"

Would it be more than you have deserved? But, I entreat you, do not so far mistake the purpose and the motive for which this heavy visitation was sent. You speak of the motive as vengeance: it is not vengeance, but love. He who has declared that He willeth not the death of a sinner, has declared likewise that His chastenings are the tokens of His love. How earnestly does St. Paul warn us against ‘forgetting the exhortation which speaketh unto us as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou are rebuked of Him: for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.’ And he reminds us, that though ‘no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.’* And, with respect to the purpose for which God sends tribulation, hear David’s testimony, who had the very trial under which you are smarting: ‘It is good for me that I have been in trouble, that I may learn Thy statutes. Before I was troubled, I went wrong; but now have I kept Thy word.’†

“Would to God I had read my Bible better!” exclaimed Mr. Flint; “for when evil thoughts occur, and I am tempted to go back to disbelief, I cannot recal such passages as these—they do not come into my mind as naturally as they do into yours.” And he referred to the texts I had quoted, and read them over more than once. When he had done, I thus proceeded:

* Heb. xii. 5–11.

† Psalm cxix. 67, 71.

"I trust, my dear sir, that you see enough in those passages to convince you of what many other texts would abundantly confirm, that the affliction under which you are now bowed down was intended by the Almighty, not as a vindictive display of His power, (though, as I have said, even that could have given no cause of complaint,) but as a positive act of mercy to yourself. But this is not all: it was likewise an act of most tender mercy to your poor boy. Just think what he has been spared. If he had lived, he must needs have been exposed to a multitude of temptations and trials of which hitherto he knew nothing; he would have incurred the tremendous responsibilities of being a rich man, and, in addition to having his own soul to answer for, he would have had to render an account for the souls of his family and dependents. And what if, through your example or teaching, he had been brought, like yourself, into a state of doubt or unbelief? What if, casting away the fear of God, he had given up his youth and manhood to profligacy and the unbridled indulgence of his appetites? What if—but I will pursue such thoughts no further, for I see how they pain you. Only, my dear sir, reflect how far his actual condition was from any thing like this. And will you not try to feel that you have great cause for thankfulness? that you could never have done so well for him yourself as God has, who has borne him over the waves of this troublesome world so swiftly and so safely; who has taken him 'from the evil to come;'* yea, who has 'speedily taken him away, lest that wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul?'"†

* Isaiah lvii. 1.

† Wisdom iv. 11.

"I ought to have thought of this, Mr. Warlingham, though it is a thought more calculated to give me dismay than comfort; for if there has been mercy in poor Julian's removal, it is because he is removed from the influence of my example: perhaps he has already suffered from it! Oh, what a miserable thought, that I may have made him less fit for death than he would have been, if he had died before his poor mother was taken from us; but I did not wilfully mislead him, indeed I did not. I was self-deceived."

"If you feel this as acutely, sir, as I am sure you do, let me entreat you to remember that you have still two other children. What is past is irremediable; but you *may* take care that *they* are brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Another groan burst from Mr. Flint as he exclaimed, "What a miserable, guilty wretch I am! I see it all now: I see how I have neglected my poor children; and my boy, I know little of his state of mind:—if he was as I am myself, he was not fit to die; if he was what he ought to have been, how he must have despised me!"

"Nay, Mr. Flint; you do both yourself and him injustice: you cannot say that you know little of his state of mind, when you remember the last conversation with him which I witnessed: and, as for despising you, here you shall judge for yourself. This book," said I, "was his legacy to me; and, as you see by its envelope, his wish was that I should not open it while he lived."

As I thus spoke, I drew from my bosom the little packet which Julian had given me so shortly before his death, and laid it before Mr. Flint, who seized it, and turned

over its pages with an eagerness which showed that he had never seen it before.

"I value that volume," said I, "as much as even you could do; but *I* am not the person who ought now to possess it; and I feel I shall best fulfil his wishes by giving it you. If you were unlikely to appreciate it, the case would have been different; but you will find a blessing in it, that will make you prize it as it ought to be prized. I see wonder in your countenance; and it is wonderful that so young a boy should have made such an admirable collection of meditations and prayers. A few at the beginning, in a different hand, are, I conclude, his mother's writing: she, perhaps, it was who suggested the plan, but he has followed it out with much piety and much good sense. Here are the prayers against his boyish faults—prayers for his sisters, and for others who were near and dear; but that to which I would specially direct your attention is upon the last page—it is a prayer for yourself,—‘for my dearest father;’ and when you have read it, you will, I think, allow that it is a sufficient proof of his own deep humility, and his all-absorbing reverential affection for you."

Mr. Flint took the book in his hand and commenced reading; but how far he proceeded I know not, for, before a minute had elapsed, the tears which had been so long pent up began to flow, sobs choked his utterance, he rose from his chair, pressed my hand, and retired to an inner chamber, to weep there, where no eye could see him, and no ear could hear the outpourings of mourning penitence, but His Whose sacrifice is a troubled spirit, and Who despiseth not the broken and contrite heart.

The remainder of my tale is soon told. The affliction which, by the great mercy of God, came in to do the work which the mere force of argument, perhaps, would never have accomplished, was not sent in vain. Within a few days after the incident just related, the combined causes of sorrow and remorse brought on, as was to be expected, a severe attack of illness, which continued for some weeks ; but the sickness was not unto death ; and when my parishioner rose from his bed, he came forth an altered man—he was no longer an infidel, but had cast off—and, as the event proved, cast off for ever—the evil principles which had so nearly been his ruin.

It will readily be believed, that throughout the progress of his malady, and subsequent convalescence, I was as seldom absent from the sufferer as possible ; and that, while with all plainness I set before him the enormity of his past transgressions, I endeavoured to keep his mind in that right mean which is as far from despair, on the one hand, as it is from the not less dangerous, and far more common, error of presumption, on the other.

It is unnecessary to dwell on the various conversations that passed between us : suffice it to say, that with deep thankfulness I have to acknowledge that my labours were successful. Mr. Flint's penitence was no mere transient ebullition of feeling, caused by his sudden bereavement, and destined to pass away as the recollections of it become less acute. As he began, so he continued to the end, earnest and consistent ; and the growing evidence of his increasing holiness of life was continually before my eyes in the various changes which

were gradually developed in himself and all that belonged to him.

From being one who never set foot within the walls of the church, he became the most regular and exemplary of the congregation ; not contenting himself with attendance on Sunday-services, but eagerly availing himself of the opportunities which the fasts and festivals of the Church afforded him (for, alas, as yet the *daily* service is not restored) of visiting the house of God.

† From being one who cared nothing for Church-principles, and saw no value in the Church-system, he learned to appreciate them and to live by them. From being one to whom reason was every thing and faith was nothing, he became in all things an humble-minded follower of his Saviour, thankful for what has been revealed, but content with *that*, and eager only to obtain the blessing pronounced on those who, though they have not seen, have yet believed.

Nor was the change less remarkable in the character and appearance of his household. His establishment was reduced, his hunters and costly equipages sold, his table was no longer the envy of the glutton and the epicure, and the costly follies of the upholsterer ceased to be held in favour at Baggesden Hall : in a word, Mr. Flint had become conscious of the grievous error he had committed in supposing that his wealth could be safely expended upon himself.

It was not of course to be expected that such extensive changes could take place without creating the usual quantity of wonderment which such events produce in a

gossiping neighbourhood. Some people said that Mr. Flint had been ruined by gambling, some that he had turned Methodist, some hinted that there was madness in the Flint family ; but the greater part agreed with wonderful unanimity that avarice was the secret mainspring of Mr. Flint's actions, and prophesied that in a few years he would outdo Gideon Bagges himself in meanness and parsimony. Had they looked a little more carefully, they might, perhaps, have discovered for themselves that the wealth of that wretched miser was at last being sanctified to the glory of God and the good of man ; they might have seen that the hungry were fed, the naked clothed, the sick tended ; they might have wondered less how it happened, that whenever a church or a school, a hospital or an almshouse, was to be erected or endowed in the neighbourhood, an anonymous contributor was sure to be found, whose munificence made the desired object attainable at once : yet no eye but His which seeth in secret could have detected the full extent of Mr. Flint's alms-deeds, or the self-denial which (even with his large fortune) he was in the habit of exercising, in order that he might have adequate funds at his disposal.

Meanwhile the chastening hand of his heavenly Father was still upon him, as if for the purpose of weaning his heart more and more from the things of this world, and keeping him in that submissive, humble state, which is the best preservative against relapses into sin. Blow after blow fell upon him : first, poor old Michael, his faithful attendant through so many years, was taken from him,—and the loss was as severe as though they had

been connected by the ties of blood ; then in a few years more, his little Susan was removed, after an illness of not many days ; and lastly, the flower of the flock, the light of his eyes, the pure and gentle Mary, fell into a deep decline, and withered away just as she arrived at womanhood, and seemed destined to be the prop and comfort of his declining years.

These were bitter trials ; but by the time the last fell on him, he had so far disciplined his own mind as to be able to say *from his heart*, as well as with his lips, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord." He had learned to see, in all its blackness, the guilt of his early life ; he now felt the tremendous danger he had incurred in wilfully and deliberately casting aside his baptismal privileges. Alas, how many are there who, having partaken of his sin, have failed to partake of his repentance, and in such a condition have been cut off ! Alas, how many more, who seem to think it a matter of course that they *must* break their baptismal vows, who view such an act with indifference, and look upon their future forgiveness as equally a matter of course ! From both of these states Mr. Flint was mercifully preserved : so long as he continued on earth, he felt that daily penitence and self-abasement were the least that could be required of him, and that no chastisements, however grievous, could be more than his sins deserved ; but in the bosom of the Church he found a peaceful resting-place ; her teaching filled him with such godly hope and consolation, that his trust in his Almighty Father's gracious purposes towards him was

steadfast and unmovable ; and the constant feeling of his heart might have been expressed in the touching words of one whose life is the best commentary on his writings :

So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone :
And with the morn those angel-faces smile
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile !



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33 Ann-street.

